



# ARMMA

NEWS



**Our Youth!**  
**Our Pride**  
**Our Hope**  
**Our Future**

**XLIX 4**  
JULY-AUG-SEPT  
**2015**





1915-2015  
Centennial of the  
Armenian Genocide

Կը Յիշեմ եւ Կը Պահանջեմ  
I Remember and Demand

## AMAA NEWS

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## Editorial Message

# Our Youth!

## Our Pride

## Our Hope

## Our Future

Zaven Khanjian

«Տե՛ս մեր շարքերը\* խանդաբորբ եւ արի»  
Անդրանիկ Ծառուկեան

*Behold our ranks\*, fervent and brave*

Antranik Dzaroukian

The Mekhitarist Armenian Monastery in Vienna is a beacon of cultural treasure, which for over two centuries, has amassed a wealth of Mekhitarist monk authored publications as well as one of the richest collections of 19th and 20th century Armenian literature library and print media. I have had the pleasure and the inquisitiveness of diving into the ocean of Ottoman era Constantinople Armenian newspapers where, to my astonishment, I came across explicit lamentation in penned articles aimed at the apathy of their new generation, singing the blues of a dark future of the nation.



The cycle of this mental fatigue recurs with every generation. It is a phenomenon that we have continued to experience in the post Genocide 20th century and continue to experience it today. It is a state of mind that stems from our apprehension of the influence of presumed changes in a host of values on new generations who blossom and are reared in an evolving world.

The Genocide Centennial is not yet over, but what we came to witness on this occasion so far this year, has anchored an unwavering confidence in our youth, making us proud of their interests, accomplishments, creativity, sense of belonging and sense of responsibility. A mental survey of our youth around the globe reveals that never in the history of our nation have we had such an army of students in higher education who constitute contingents of potential professionals, scientists, educators and prominent stars in the fields of science and art.

This issue of AMAA News which you are holding in your hands is a manifestation of all that promise to come. Here, you will find news from a Kindergarten in Greece, to classroom desks in Armenia, the Near East and the United States. From lecture halls of Haigazian University to the college campuses of our scholarship recipients, from the benches of the Vocational Bible Study enrollees to the Sunday school classrooms, and from Summer Camps in Armenia, Lebanon, France and the United States to Day Centers in Armenia, this is our promise for the future.

The AMAA operates, funds and supports bee hives of our youth whose beautiful smiles, radiating faces, glowing confidence, blissful

*cont'd on the following page....*

# In Memoriam: Kirk Kerkorian (1917-2015)



**K**irk Kerkorian, Armenian-American billionaire and great philanthropist, died on June 15, 2015. He was 98 years old.

Born in 1917 in Fresno, CA, Mr. Kerkorian was the youngest of four children born to Armenian immigrants Aharon and Lily Kerkorian. The first language learned at home was Armenian. "We didn't learn the English language until we hit the streets," Mr. Kerkorian once said.

Named after his two daughters, Mr. Kerkorian's Lincy Foundation has made major charitable contributions over the years. In the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake that shook Armenia, the Foundation made large contributions to different projects in Armenia, including the repair of 420 kilometers of a major highway and the construction of 3,700 new apartments in the north-western region of Armenia which was hit hard by the earthquake. Over the years, the Lincy Foundation has contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to Armenians worldwide, including \$14 million to provide heating oil for Armenia's freezing population during the harsh winter of 1993, \$4.5 million in 2006 to all 28 Armenian schools in Lebanon, and millions of dollars to the Armenian Schools in California including the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School. The Foundation has also donated millions of dollars to the projects of Hayastan All-Armenia Fund in Artsakh. It is estimated that from 1989 to 2011, the Lincy Foundation has donated over one billion dollars, split equally between Armenian and non-Armenian charities.

Soon after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, the United Armenian Fund was founded in California, with the coalition of seven major Armenian American organizations, including

the Lincy Foundation and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, to airlift humanitarian aid to Armenia.

In May 2005, then President of Armenia Robert Kocharian awarded Mr. Kerkorian with Armenia's highest honor, the Medal of Fatherland, named "National Hero of Armenia."

"The towering and most revered presence of this gallant man on the scene of the modern history of the nation does not lie in his billions or astute business sense or ingenious successes," said Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA. "That certainly deserves much regard and admiration. Kirk Kerkorian's magnanimity lies in his humility and humbleness in the most truthful Christian spirit. Mr. Kerkorian never sought the spotlight. He always opted anonymity or distanced himself from praise and flattery. Rare are the species of his kind and even rarer now that we have lost him. He will be missed."

## **Editorial message** ....cont'd from previous page

playgrounds, jubilant graduations and gleeful spirits are laid open on the pages of this issue. They are our pride, our hope and our future.

The early march starts with "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" Proverbs 1:7 and continues to grow in the knowledge of the love of God "Trust in the LORD and do good" Psalms 37:3.

Our confidence in our youth and hope to entrust them with our future does not come without a duty and an obligation on our part, a sweet burden and sense of responsibility as their senior generation. Two major and strategic roles remain our burden for which we have to plan, sacrifice, toil and sweat.

The first is **OPPORTUNITY**.

None of the achievements, victories, fulfillment of potentials and realization of dreams can come true without the creation of opportunities. For 97 successive years AMAA leaders, together with valiant and compassionate donors, a caring general membership and God loving good willed supporters, have toiled to build avenues and opportunities for thousands of youth to reach their potential in life. The cycle of responsibility continues. Today, in the footsteps of their predecessors, current AMAA leadership, with your fervent support, continues to expand its mission

of love for infants, children, teens and young adults in the fields of education, evangelism, child care, health care, summer camps, infant care and relief efforts. No retreat and no holding back. Our youth deserve and we shall oblige.

The second role is that of **EXEMPLARY ROLE MODELS**. Children learn by following. Our values, our behavior and our attitudes lie exposed before our youth who are excellent observers and expert emulators. Our spirit of voluntarism, sacrificial behavior, work habits and moral values should all reflect who we are and who we want our youth to be. Our faith, our love of God and the teachings of the Word should mirror our lives which in turn are the silent lessons that our youth learn from. Deviating from the values we uphold does not reflect well on the youth who look for role models in life. If we set Christ with His love, indulgence, care, compassion, kindness and sacrifice as our role model and exercise His teachings in life, we can feel good about our youth.

Our youth are doing fine, provided we creatively continue offering bountiful opportunities to them and exercise a behavior worthy of emulating.

Vive la our youth!

*\*The connotation is to Armenian Youth in general and not denominational or institutional. □*



# AMAA to Hold 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Banquet in San Francisco, CA



**T**he 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will be held on Saturday, October 17 at 9:30 a.m. at the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, 725 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco, CA 94132. Participants in the meeting will review the activities and the financial reports of the Association.

The 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Banquet will be held on the same day, Saturday, October 17, at 6:00 p.m. at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront, 1800 Old Bayshore Hwy., Burlingame, CA 94010. The theme of the Banquet is **"100 Years: The Miracle of Survival."** The Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria. Rev. Selimian will also share an audiovisual eyewitness account about the recent situation in Syria, and in particular of Aleppo, highlighting the urgent needs of the people and the relief work rendered there by the Armenian Evangelical Community on behalf of the AMAA.

The Master of Ceremonies of the Banquet will be Dr. Jerry Manoukian, current President of the Armenian Medical International Committee, who chaired the 9<sup>th</sup> Armenian Medical World Congress, held in San Francisco in 2005. Dr. Manoukian is a graduate of Hahnemann University School of Medicine and works in Mountain View, CA specializing in Internal Medicine. He is affiliated with El Camino Hospital and Stanford Hospital & Clinics.

The Banquet will also feature Composer and Pianist Tatev Amiryan and Vocalist Seda Kizirian. Ms. Amiryan is a native of Armenia. She has given performances extensively in Armenia and in the United States performing not only her own music but also pieces from the classical and contemporary repertoire and piano improvisations. Ms. Amiryan is a graduate of Tchaikovsky Special Music School and the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, Armenia. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance working on her dissertation which is a dedication to the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide. Ms. Kizirian was born in Yerevan, Armenia and is a graduate of the Komitas State Conservatory. Since 2008, she has resided in San Francisco and has graced the Armenian churches of the Bay Area and their communities with her performances.

In conjunction with the AMAA Annual Meeting, the Armenian Evangelical World Council will have its meetings on Thursday and Friday, October 15-16 and the Board of Directors of the AMAA will meet on Friday evening to report on activities and discuss future plans.

The Annual Meeting Worship of Praise will be held on Sunday, October 18 at the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco, CA. Participants will praise God for the AMAA and its services in 24 countries around the world. The service will also include a moment of remembrance dedicated to those AMAA members who concluded their earthly pilgrimage during the past year and joined the heavenly audience. The service will conclude with the installation of the newly elected AMAA Board Members.

Those who are interested in attending the AMAA Banquet may contact Valina Agbabian at 415.831.6202, Margo Gulesserian at 408.395.0738, Aline Gulesserian Richards at 925.362.1438 or AMAA Headquarters at 201.265.2607. □





**"Syrian Armenians are industrious, creative, spirited and productive. A national strategy must be developed to invest that immense potential in the Homeland." Zaven Khanjian**

## **And yet there is none!**

The Syrian conflict continues to spill blood, sow destruction, harvest lives and destroy communities. The Syrian Armenians, an integral part of a diverse, harmonious and peaceful mosaic, which has bloomed, blossomed and prospered since the remnants of the Genocide survivors took refuge there one hundred years ago, have dearly paid their share of the calamity that has struck Syria. An unimaginable and irreplaceable industrial economic wealth is in ruins. Savvy traders, who kept the wheels of a healthy national industry running, are out of business. Craftsmen, who not only repaired automated elements of the nation's industrial machine but recreated it, are lamentably dispersed and displaced. Engineers and entrepreneurs who built a modern network of roads and highways in the country have closed shop. It is a tragedy of world war dimension. It is reminiscent of the Genocide that befell our people a century ago.

Most have relocated. A tiny, albeit courageous, core leadership and a fraction of the community are left behind facing a dark, grave and unpredictable future.

After three years of uninterrupted sustenance and as a result of the pounding pain and diminution on the ground, a new strategy had to emerge. And it did. We called it ***Syria Lifeline***. It's a strategy that assists the willing but unable, the most vulnerable segment of the community, move away from the war zone and bridged thru Lebanon, flown to the safe haven of the Homeland.

We put ***Syria Lifeline*** to the test and are silently moving, one family at a time. No drums, no trumpets and in full coordination with the leadership of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria. Nothing is spared from our ongoing basic sustenance of those who are still in the war zone. But we have to expand our efforts in this humanitarian rescue mission to help our kin move to safety.

We admit the strategy still lacks coordination and settlement assistance in the Homeland, a very important link in the cycle of safety rings. But we are working on it and hope to make headway with the assistance of other humanitarian entities.

At this crucial junction in the history of the Near East, ***Syria Lifeline*** is an act of extreme national strategic importance both for the Diaspora communities in the Near East and the Homeland, Armenia. The AMAA needs your generous support to continue our rescue mission and prepare to do more as the situation continues to deteriorate in Syria and in particular in the embattled city of Aleppo, home to the largest Armenian Community.

At the Centennial of the Genocide, while we continue to pay tribute and respect our dead, it is far more important to save those who are living, get them out of the danger zone, give them a chance to live, create, prosper, pursue happiness, invest their immense potential in the Homeland and praise the Lord.

Thank you for your generous support.

God's blessings on you and your family,

Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO



# Haigazian University Marks 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## As Class of 2015 Bids Farewell at Graduation Ceremony



**S**ome 227 students from Haigazian University's Schools of Business Administration & Economics and Arts & Sciences (Humanities, Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences) received their undergraduate and graduate degrees on July 3 at Club La Marina, Dbayeh, during the 55<sup>th</sup> Commencement Exercises, which also marked Haigazian's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The seashore courtyard was packed with officials, family and friends gathered to applaud the graduating students, amidst an atmosphere of cheer and moments of high emotion.

The ceremony opened with a formal processional march of Haigazian faculty in academic regalia, followed by the Lebanese National Anthem and the prayer of invocation offered by Campus Minister Rev. Wilbert Van Saane.

University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian welcomed students and their families and the distinguished guests, and addressed the Class of 2015, inviting them to be the change makers of the future, overcoming the shortcomings of our countries. "If you are given the choice of more money or more productivity, choose the second. If you get to the top, still look up. If you fast from food, focus also on the fasting of the heart. If you want to protect the cause of your religious or political group, show the highest of ethical standards."

He invited them to be inspired by the Phoenicians, saying "Our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commencement is taking place on the shores of the Mediterranean. Be inspired by the creativity of the Phoenicians. Build boats that do good, but do not invade. Ride the boats to meet people and exchange experiences, not to promote your status. Develop your skills to grow and help others live better." He concluded by making a reference to the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary motto "*Pride in Merit*," and said, "Your pride should be based on hard work, ethics, and vision, and not connections, majority pressure, religious, social or family privileges as we see in our societies."

In his inspiring speech, Keynote Speaker Patrice Gillibert, Secretary of the UN Committee against Torture, based in Geneva, focused on two key concepts: Education and Freedom. Sharing a quotation from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "*Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*," Mr. Gillibert said that all fundamental values of respect, equality, justice and freedom are in the core mission and vision of Haigazian University. He concluded by acknowledging the role of Haigazian University in leadership and contribution to human rights, wishing the graduates to shine and inspire humanity.

Chairman of the Lebanese Banking Control Commission, 1978 graduate Samir Hammoud, who in the name of Haigazian alumni saluted the graduates, and proudly acknowledged, "All the success I have made is attributed to Haigazian University." Mr. Hammoud encouraged students to travel and discover the world, but never to emigrate, in addition to work toward giving a meaning and purpose to their life.

Minister of Education and Higher Education Elias Bou Saab congratulated the graduates, praising the role Haigazian has played since its early beginnings 60 years ago. He also pointed out the motto of the University, "*truth, freedom, and service*," giving live examples and considering it as universal values for humanity.

The three guests were bestowed Haigazian University's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medals, presented by President Haidostian.

Valedictorian Arpa Aintablian looked at this Commencement Day as "a journey to prosper, persevere and to thrive, and Valedictorian Sarah Hatoum, a University Scholarship Program scholar, expressed her gratitude to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), sponsors of the Program, appreciating the multi-culturism and co-existence at Haigazian University, as a reflection of the real Lebanese society.

After singing the Alma Mater, and upon the Benediction offered by Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, graduates threw their caps high into the air, erupting in loud cheers and shouting.

The Baccalaureate Service of Haigazian University took place on June 28 in the First Armenian Evangelical Church. The speaker was Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, Coordinator of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance at the Presbyterian Church (USA). He said, "You will be given what you need to be restored! There is food in the wilderness, wisdom in the silence of God, a mission – your unique mission – before you, and companions along the way to share the burden, the work, and the joy." □





# Avedisian School Graduation in Yerevan



**T**he Annual Graduation Ceremony is a great tradition at the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School for grades fourth through ninth. This year the ceremony, which was held on June 19, was unique in a couple of aspects. It was the first graduation ceremony to be held at the new School building!

It was with great honor that a number of distinguished guests from both Armenia and the Diaspora were able to attend including: Karen Nazaryan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Susanna Azatyan, Head of the Preschool and Secondary Education Department of RA Ministry of Education and Science; Armine Ohanyan, Senior Specialist of the Preschool and Secondary Education Department of RA Ministry of Education; Ruzanna Khachatryan, Wife of the RA Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan; family members of Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan; Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, President of the American University of Armenia; Gevorg Goyunyan, Vice President of the American University of Armenia and staff members; Abgar Apinyan, President of Writers' Union of Yerevan; Dr. Vartkes and Mary Najarian, benefactors of the School; Representatives of the AMAA U.S. Medical Mission Team; Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia; School principals of the Malatia-Sebastia District; various representatives of international and social organizations; school parents and journalists.

The theme of this year's Graduation Program was "Patriotism," and it was not

by chance. The primary mission of the Avedisian School is to create patriotic, well-educated citizens who are devoted and loyal to their Homeland. Performances by the students included dancing, singing patriotic songs and recitations of poems.

After his speech, which urged students to study well and be good citizens for Armenia, the School Benefactor, Edward Avedisian introduced the keynote speaker, Karen Nazaryan. In his remarks, Mr. Nazaryan stated that Armenia is "...one of the richest nations in the world with its educational and cultural heritage. Avedisian School is not only a unique educational institution in Armenia but in the whole region. I know that a lot of talented children study here and participate in various Olympiads and win awards. I know that many outstanding teachers work here and their dedicated services have been greatly appreciated. And these are the best rewards to our compatriots in the Diaspora, to the Avedisian family and to the Armenian Missionary Association of America for their support in the realization of this patriotic and glorious educational institution."

In her speech, Avedisian School Principal Melania Geghamyan stated that she is a proud Principal. She is proud of her School benefactors, proud of her teachers, and most of all proud of her students. She is also immensely happy for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' current success and is overjoyed that they will not yet leave the School, but will continue their education at the Avedisian High School.

The Graduation Ceremony was followed by planting a silver fir tree in the School yard, in memory of Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian.

On September 1, 2014, the new Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School opened its doors for the 2014-15 Academic Year. Constructed in the impoverished sector of Yerevan's Malatia-Sebastia District, the School provides free education to all its students. Over the years, the School has won multiple academic awards, a testament to its excellence in education. □





## Year-End Programs and Commencement Exercises Held at Merdinian School

Upon the conclusion of the 2014-15 academic year, the Charlotte and Elise Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School held its Year-End Programs and Commencement Exercises in two stages. On June 6, the Kindergarten section of the School held its program. The children entered the hall in their white gowns, proudly displaying the "Forget Me Not" flower, symbol of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, which they painted with their own little hands. This year, 23 Kindergarten students graduated and received diplomas from their homeroom teacher and the School principal. The students presented a one-hour program in Armenian and English languages – they prayed, sang, danced and recited.

The Elementary and Middle School commencement exercises were held on June 14. In the first section of the program, the 5th graders received their diplomas following a program of songs and recitations by the students. On behalf of the School Board, Chairman Dr. Vahe Nalbandian praised God for another successful year and expressed his gratitude to all those who had worked in the pursuit of excellence at Merdinian School throughout the year.

Keynote Speaker Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, a proud Merdinian parent, addressed the graduates and said, "You will have to decide henceforth where your steps will guide you. Do not hesitate to ask endless questions, because the answers to your questions will lead you toward new horizons. And especially be exemplary



Armenians and Citizens of this great Nation of the United States of America. Though difficult, you can find a way. Remember that you are the children of an over five thousand year old Armenian nation."

Following Mr. Nazarian's message, the 8th graders recited two poems in Armenian and English, and sang two Armenian songs. Valedictorian speeches from the 8th grade were delivered by Nanor Bedrosian in Armenian and Sasha Yermakov in English, followed by the presentation of diplomas and awards. Alique Kakhkejian presented to the principal a beautiful frame of her class pictures.

In her concluding remarks, School Principal Lina Arslanian congratulated all the graduates and said, "We are proud of our achievements, but mostly by our graduates." Then she addressed the graduates and said, "When you walk in your new paths, advance without fear, with firm steps, and never forget that you are the creditors of your national rights."

The ceremony concluded with the Lord's Prayer and a prayer offered by Board member Helen Haig. □



## Sipan Armenian School of Paramus, NJ



Sipan Armenian School held its year end Program and Graduation on Friday, June 12. Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, brought the greetings of the Association and assured the School of AMAA's continued support. Sipan Armenian School was founded in 1978 by the Alumni Association of the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut, Lebanon. The School has Pre Nursery/Nursery/PreK/KG to seventh grades and meets on Friday nights at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ. Throughout the years, the School has provided Armenian children an opportunity to learn the Armenian language, history, and its rich cultural heritage. □



# Սահակ-Մեսրոպ Հայ Թրիստոնեայ Վարժարանի Մանկապարտեզի, Նախակրթարանի եւ Միջնակարգի Հունձքը

**Ս**ահակ-Մեսրոպ Վարժարանի Մանկամտորի եւ Մանկապարտեզի ամավերջի հանդէսը տեղի ունեցաւ Մայիս 19, 2015-ի յետ միջօրէին դպրոցիս շրջափակին մէջ, ուր Տիկ. Լուսի Ստեփանեան եւ Տիկ. Թամար Մխճեան, ուղղեցին բարեգալուստի խօսքերը:

Ապա Մանկապարտեզի եւ Մանկամտորի աշակերտները իրենց դողդոջուն մանկական շրթներով հանդէս եկան խմբերգներով, խմբային արտասանութիւններով եւ հեզաճկուն պարերով: Մանկապարտեզի աշակերտները ինքնավստահօրէն ներկայացուցին պարախառն եւ երգախառն ներկայացում մը, ճիշդ ունենալով «Հայ Մշակոյթ»ը:

Մանկապարտեզի աշակերտները ստացան իրենց առաջին վկայականները Պրն. Տնօրէնին ձեռամբ: Տնօրէն Պրն. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեան իր կարգին քաջալերեց փոքրիկներուն կատարումը, գնահատանքներ ուղղեց բոլոր ուսուցիչներուն եւ ժրջան ծնողական մարմնին, որոնք ամբողջ տարին անսակարկ նուիրումով աշխատած էին յօգուտ մեր դպրոցին:

Վարժարանի նախակրթարանի եւ Միջնակարգի վկայականաց բաշխման հանդիսութիւնը տեղի ունեցաւ Մայիս 31, 2015-ի երեկոյեան «Բազ Նազ»-ի եկեղեցւոյ մէջ:

Առաջին առիթով Ը.դասարանի Salutatorian՝ Սթէֆանի Խաչիկեան բարիգալուստի խօսքեր արտասանեց թարգմանը հանդիսանալով իր դասընկերներուն, որմէ ետք Ե. դասարանի շրջանաւարտներ՝ Աթինա Պաղտասարեան, Մելանա Կենտալ, Թաթիանա Սվանեան եւ Սարին Վարդապետեան կատարեցին դրօշակի արարողութիւնը: Ամերիկեան ուխտը կատարեցին Աստղիկ Գասպարյան եւ Սարին Նազարեան: Հայկական ուխտը կատարեցին Լիանա Ծիրանեան եւ Յակոբ Քիւնեան, իսկ ազգային քայլերգները կատարուեցան Ե. եւ Ը. շրջանաւարտներու կողմէ: Հայերէն աղօթքը կատարեց՝ Ճէֆրի Պալեան, եւ Անգլերէն աղօթքը՝ Քրիստինա Ակոճեան:

Ե.Կարգի շրջանաւարտները արտասանեցին «Հայու Հոգին» եւ երգեցին «Հայեր Միացե՛ք» եւ «Պէգարսէ Հէ Լիւս» երգերը:

Նախակրթարանի վկայականաց բաշխման համար Տիկ. Սօնա Պատալեան բեմ հրաւիրեց Պրն. Ինճէճիքեանը, որ Տիկ. Մայտայի եւ Տիկ. Սօնայի աջակցութեամբ վկայականները եւ մրցանակները յանձնէ աշակերտներուն: Այսպիսով Նախակրթարանէն վկայական ստացան 27 աշակերտներ: Պրն. Ինճէճիքեան բեմ հրաւիրեց Տիկ. Տէպի Աֆշարեանը՝ օրուան պատգամաբերը, որ իր պատգամը փոխանցեց մեծ ոգետրութեամբ: Ան օգտակար թելադրանքներ եւ խրատներ տուաւ շրջանաւարտներուն:

Միջնակարգի ուղերձները կատարեցին Valedictorian-ներ Քրիստինա Ծիրանեան Հայերէնով՝ եւ Սվանա Մինասեան Անգլերէնով եւ իրենց լաւագոյն յուշերն ու զգացումները փոխանցեցին տնօրէնութեան, ուսուցիչներուն եւ ծնողներուն, որոնք մեծ զոհաբերութեամբ զիրենք հասցուցած էին այս հանգրուանին:

Ը. Կարգի դաստիարակ՝ Տիկ. Լենա Ակիլեանի օգնութեամբ, Պրն. Տնօրէնը Միջնակարգի 20 շրջանաւարտներուն յանձնեց վկայականներն ու մրցանակները, որոնք հպարտ եւ ուրախ քայլերով պիտի առաջնորդուին Երկրորդական վարժարան, բաժնուելով Սահակ-Մեսրոպի ընտանիքէն, ուր երկար տարիներ վայելած էին դպրոցին բարիքները, գիտութիւն ամբարելով եւ քրիստոնէական շունչով դաստիարակուելով եւ հայրենասիրական բարձր զգացումներով տոգորուելով:

Փակման խօսքը կատարեց Պրն. Ինճէճիքեան. ան շնորհաւորեց շրջանաւարտները եւ նորանոր յաջողութիւններ մաղթեց իրենց ապագայի ծրագիրներուն: Տնօրէնը ծաղկեփունջերով գնահատեց նաեւ դաստիարակ ուսուցիչները, որոնք արժանացան ներկաներուն ծափահարութեան:

Վեր. Վալէ Էքմէքեանի օրհնութեան աղօթքով հանդէսը ավարտեցաւ եւ շրջանաւարտները ապագայի տեսլականով միացան իրենց ծնողներուն, գոհունակ սրտով եւ ջերմ զգացումներով: □





# Commencements and Year-End Programs

## Celebrated at the Armenian Evangelical Schools in the Middle East

The month of June was filled with year-end Programs and Graduation Ceremonies at the Armenian Evangelical Schools in the Middle East – Lebanon, Syria and Greece – that are supported by the AMAA. We thank God for enabling our Schools to have another successful academic year and wish them many more successes in the upcoming years. Congratulations to all our graduates!

The **Y. M. Philibosian Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut, Lebanon** held its Commencement on Friday, June 26 in the School's courtyard. The Guest Speaker was Penyamian Bchakjian. The students presented a program of songs and recitations and awards were given to the students for their achievements. After distributing the diplomas, School Principal Dr. Zaven M. Messerlian addressed the graduating students and guests. After his closing remarks, Rev. Hrair Cholakian, Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church, gave the Benediction.

The Commencement Exercises of the **Armenian Evangelical Central High School of Ashrafieh, Beirut, Lebanon** were dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. Thirteen Elementary and 19 Secondary students received their diplomas. The descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide expressed strong feelings of nationalism and patriotism through poems, songs, dances and speeches. They stressed the Christian Spirit and thanked the School Board, Principal, and the teachers for arming them with the Hope of Justice. Principal Maral Deyirmenjian elaborated on Poet Zabel Yessayan's interpretation of the Armenian Spirit. She urged the graduates to remain true to this spirit, be honest, sincere, and transparent. "Just develop a personality," she added, "that reflects the culmination of knowledge and moral fortitude – the twin keys of success." Four days later, all Secondary graduates who had taken the Government Baccalaureate Exam were notified that all had passed the exam!



*Armenian Evangelical College, Beirut, Lebanon*



*Armenian Evangelical Central High School, Ashrafieh, Lebanon*



*Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School, Nor Marash, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon*

Commencement for the **Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School of Nor Marash, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon** was held on Monday, June 29 at the Hagop Der Melkonian Theater Hall. Among the distinguished guests were Mayor Antranig Messerlian and Colonel Haroutune Guekguezian. The Keynote Speaker was Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University, who conveyed to the students the four important and practical lessons in life. The students presented a program of songs and recitations. Awards were distributed to students for their achievements. After distributing the diplomas, Vartoug Balekjian, School Principal, congratulated the students and urged parents and graduates to be faithful in all their relations with people and future careers. The Benediction was offered by Rev. Raffi Messerlian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash.



The **Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Anjar, Lebanon** held its Commencement on Thursday, July 2. The students presented a program of Armenian music, recitations and dance. Keynote Speaker was Doris Melkonian from the United States, daughter of Rev. John Melkonian, a former Principal of the School, and Janette Melkonian, a former teacher. She urged the students to be faithful to God, to their language and to their heritage. Following the distribution of diplomas to the graduating class, Rev. Raffi Messerlian, announced that the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East has appointed Pastor Hagop Akbashian as the new Principal of the School. A reception followed the Program.



*Armenian Evangelical Secondary School, Anjar, Lebanon*



*Armenian Evangelical P & E Torossian Middle School, Nor Amanos, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon*

Despite the political unrest in the country, the **Armenian Evangelical Bethel School of Aleppo, Syria** had a successful 2014-15 academic year. The result of their tireless work was the year-end Commencement which was held on Sunday, June 21, during the worship service at the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church. After his message, Rev. Haroutune Selimian addressed the graduates, and noted that as the generation of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide they are the proof of a steadfast, creative and strong generation. The Commencement of the Intermediate Section of the School was held on Thursday, June 4. Fourteen students successfully graduated from the Intermediate Section. Both Commencements ended with the Benediction by Rev. Selimian.

The Year End Program and Commencement of the **Armenian Evangelical Peter & Elizabeth Torossian Middle School of Nor Amanos, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon** was held on Saturday, June 20. Following the Lebanese and Armenian National Anthems, Rev. Sevag Trashian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Nor Amanos, congratulated the graduates and urged them to acknowledge that they are the children of a nation with a rich culture and heritage. "Much is entrusted in you," he said. "Hence, much is expected from you." The students presented a program of songs and recitations after which ten students from the Elementary Section and ten students from the Intermediate Section received their diplomas followed by the distribution of achievement awards. After his closing remarks, Principal Seta Karagoezian congratulated all the graduates. The Program ended with a Benediction given by Rev. Sevag Trashian.



*Armenian Evangelical Bethel School, Aleppo, Syria*

The Graduation Program of the **Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten of Kokkinia, Greece** was held on Monday, June 1. Among the many guests were Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Matossian from the United States, Mariam Harutyunyan, Attaché of the Republic of Armenia's Embassy in Greece, Father Hovhannes Saghdejian, Pastor of St. James Armenian Church, representatives of area Armenian organizations, parents and guests. The students presented a beautiful bouquet of songs, recitations and Armenian dances. After his heartfelt words, Rev. Matossian expressed his joy for the delightful program. He concluded his remarks by saying "we are, and will continue to live, and we will grow." Rev. Vicken Cholakian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Kokkinia, expressed his gratitude to the teachers, parents, Church Council, benefactors and to the AMAA for their ongoing support of this Kindergarten. "On the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, these children, the survivors of the Genocide, are the fruits that we are enjoying today," said Rev. Cholakian. The Program concluded with a Benediction



*Rev. Vicken Cholakian and Rev. Joseph Matossian*



*Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten, Kokkinia, Greece*

offered by Rev. Cholakian followed by a reception prepared by the Parents' Organization.



## Meridian School Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Construction

**T**he Charlotte and Elise Merdianian Armenian Evangelical School held a groundbreaking ceremony, on July 8<sup>th</sup>, to launch construction of the new Bezjian Family Building in Sherman Oaks, CA. This state-of-the-art, 6,840 square foot structure will replace the old administration building. It features a library, science laboratory, art room, several classrooms and other facilities to serve the ongoing needs of the School's growing student population.

The project was made possible through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Albert and Terry Bezjian of Los Angeles, founders of Indo-European Foods of Glendale, who donated one million dollars to the School.

The ceremony began with opening remarks by Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, Chairman of the Board of Directors, who wholeheartedly thanked Mr. & Mrs. Bezjian for their support. Rev. Berdj Djambazian, the newly appointed Minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), prayed for the Lord's blessing for the project. Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), delivered an inspiring message about the importance of an Armenian Evangelical education and quoted from the book of Psalms that "Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain work the builders." The ceremony concluded with a prayer by Rev. Ron Tovmassian, Moderator of the AEUNA, after which the attendees gathered in the Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall of the School for a reception to celebrate the event.

The Board of Directors and Administration of the School are extremely grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Bezjian for this most generous gift. A donation of this magnitude is a testimony to the benefactors' confidence in the bright future of the School.

Congratulating the Merdianian School on this milestone, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO said, "May the School prosper, expand and may its mission touch many, many lives leading graduates to become exemplary citizens irrigating the furrows



*The Architectural rendering of the new Bezjian Building*



*L to R: Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Rev. Berdj Djambazian, Albert Bezjian, Dr. Vahe Nalbandian and Terry Bezjian*

of humanity, mankind and the nation. May their Christian faith glow and illuminate their surroundings and their exemplary love, dedication and faithfulness to their roots bountifully contribute to civilization. God bless the Bezjians and all those who contributed to this historic expansion of the School." □

## AMAA Awards Scholarships to Needy and Deserving Students

**T**his year, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) awarded over \$184,000.00 in direct scholarship grants for the 2015-16 academic year, to worthy students who attend colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. In addition, \$15,000 was assigned for qualified university students in Armenia. These scholarships range from \$200 to \$600 as the cost of higher education in Armenia is significantly less.

For over 45 years, the AMAA has helped thousands of college students with scholarships, thus helping them prepare for the future and relieving the financial burden that makes it harder to focus on their work. Moreover, since its inception, the AMAA has helped thousands of students from kindergarten to high school with tuition aid. The AMAA also provides financial aid to schools and institutions of higher education in the Near East, including Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

The scholarships granted this year were provided from several AMAA scholarship funds established over the years to help students in need. Students may request applications from AMAA headquarters in Paramus, NJ beginning in January of each year. The deadline to submit applications for the 2016-2017 academic year is May 1, 2016. □



# An Amazing and Record-Breaking Year at Camp AREV



By Rev. Razmig Minassian, Camp Director

**W**e praise God for an amazing and a record-breaking year at Camp AREV. Compared to 289 campers in 2014, this year we had 325 campers. Once again we sold out the high school camp, exceeding our capacity. Also, this year - for the first time ever - we had close to 90 young adults for a college and career weekend. God was honored, the Gospel was preached, and many lives were transformed.

This year, we introduced several new and exciting activities at Camp. A 300 foot zip line helped campers put their fears to the test as they enjoyed soaring through the open air. A new archery range allowed

campers to focus on the bulls eye, and a nine hole disc golf course, helped the campers develop meaningful relationships with one another. This year, the Camp was packed with amazing and hardworking volunteers and staff. Close to 55 counselors and CIT's served over the three weeks of camp, along with 20 additional staff members who helped make camping fun and meaningful for every camper.

Overall, Camp AREV continues to live its mission and vision which is to introduce every camper to Jesus Christ and to help them cultivate a deep, profound and growing relationship with Him. We witnessed

God's miraculous work of regeneration and salvation in the hearts of many campers. But we also rejoice that many other campers rededicated and recommitted themselves to love Jesus and follow Him in their daily lives.

I want to thank the AEUNA and the AMAA for their ongoing prayers and support. I also thank all those who support the vision and the mission of this thriving ministry. We are witnessing God's glorious handiwork and we are eager to see what He has in store for us in the future growth of our programs as well as in the expansion of our beloved Conference Center. □

## Camp AREVELK 2015

By Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian

**A**nother summer and another Camp Arevelk have come and gone. 2015 marked the sixteenth year of this wonderful AEUNA ministry. This year, we were at capacity of 141 including campers and staff. Camp Arevelk as always, was filled with great excitement and noise, as well as fellowship and worship. This ministry has been under the supervision of Camp Director Sylvia Jizmejian since the first camp in 2000. Camp Arevelk is made possible by the work of the Camp Arevelk Committee, the counselors and the staff who give of their time for this important ministry. This Camp has been essential in developing young leaders in the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship and ultimately, the churches of the AEUNA.

On Sunday August 10th, Camp Arevelk started with dinner, a swim test, cabin times and an introduction to the

theme by the speakers. This year the theme was **Walking in Obedience**. This will also be the AEYF theme for the 2015-2016 school year. The speaker for the week was Pastor Mike Penza who graduated from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and who is a youth leader at Holden Chapel in Holden, MA. Pastor Mike was able to connect with the youth during the sessions and they learned about Obedience from Old Testament characters.

On the first day, the campers are put into teams for the week. Each team plays the night games and team games together. It is a joy to see these campers bond together in their cabins, their Bible study groups, and in their teams.

Every day, the young people had a session of arts and crafts. They also had quiet times, cabin times (with counselors in groups), a Bible lesson and a session



from the speaker. The Bible teachers were Rev. Haig Kherlopian, Pastor Astor Yalenguzian and Haig Shishmanian. Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian was also there helping in any way he could.

This year, as in every year before, it was truly a blessing to all who attended Camp Arevelk. May our Lord be glorified through this essential ministry of the AEUNA. □



# KCHAG

## Hosts Summer Camps in Renovated Facilities

**K**CHAG is more than just buildings. Its core vision drives pioneering ministries to have each person see, hear and experience unforgettable moments where His word is being preached.

"KCHAG" is an acronym which, in Armenian, stands for **K**risdonyagan **C**Hanitz Amarnayin **G**etron (Christian Endeavor Summer Center). The name represents a camp experience, run by the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, which has left an indelible mark on the lives of many Armenians.

This summer, from July 9-12, The **Christian Endeavor Youth (Chanits) Group** held its one week long camp in KCHAG. Some 69 youth from Aleppo, Anjar, Beirut, and Kessab participated along with nine camp counselors. The theme was "**Offline to Online.**"

The **Christian Endeavor Adolescents (Badaniats) Group** held its one week long camp from August 3-9 with 93 youth from Anjar, Aleppo, Beirut and Dubai participating along with 16 camp counselors. The theme was "**How to be an Active Youth.**"

The **Children's Camp** was held from August 17-23 with 66 children and nine camp counselors participating. This year's theme was "**Jesus Lives in my Heart.**"

During the summer of 2015, KCHAG also hosted the Armenian Evangelical Women's Conference and several other groups from various churches and organizations.



*Children's Camp*



*Adolescents (Badaniats) Camp*

Unfortunately, the decades following the 1975 civil war left KCHAG a casualty of war, and years of occupation left much of the Camp property, including the Chapel, dining hall and cabins, with major damage, some even totally destroyed. Through the perseverance, faith and love of donors and friends, a dedicatory celebration was held on May 3, 2014 which marked completion of 70% of the planned renovations.

The fundraising effort for KCHAG continues. Additional resources and efforts are needed to ensure that KCHAG continues to maintain its rich heritage and realize the site's full potential for ministry and community development.

To support this much needed effort for KCHAG, please visit the AMAA website at [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org), or send your donation, earmarked KCHAG, to the AMAA, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. □



*Christian Endeavor Youth (Chanits) Camp*



# AMAA Summer Camps Provide Memories For Children in Armenia and Karabagh

**T**he sun shone brightly over AMAA camps throughout Armenia and Karabagh this summer. These camps continue to be a daily reminder of the goodness of our Lord and the beauty of His creations. The campers are truly thankful for their friends who share these special times with them. The Summer Camps give the campers an outlet to escape from their impoverished daily routines and be exposed to a program which fosters positive self-esteem, builds self-confidence, and most importantly lets them hear the Word of our Lord.

During the summer of 2015, a total of 2,280 children, youth and teens attended camp in Armenia and Karabagh and took part in various camp activities, which included daily Bible lessons, interactive sports, arts and crafts, hands-on environmental lessons, theater presentations with music and dance, and many other opportunities where they could bond with one another and also develop their own individual spirituality.

**Camp Sheen Shoghig** in the Hankavan region of Armenia held camps from July 3 to August 30. During this time, the Camp served a total of 1,630 children, teens and youth.

**Camp Bedrosian in Shushi, Karabagh** held camps from June 28 to August 1. The Camp provided sessions for 570 children, teens and youth.

**DVBS in Armenia and Karabagh.** AMA-Armenia and the Evangelical Church of Armenia continue organizing DVBS activities throughout Armenia and Karabagh. This year, DVBS was held in 35 towns and villages for over 3,000 children and teenagers. Over 250 volunteers served at day camps in Karabagh and Armenia.

Our partners this year included the Jinishian Memorial Foundation, Hope for Armenia of France who organized Day camps, and the Bedrosian family for its long-term sponsorship of the AMAA Camp Bedrosian in Shushi, Karabagh. Other supporters are the AMAA Office staff in Paramus, NJ, Glendale, CA and in Armenia, the Child and Orphan Care Committee, AMAA donors and AMAA Board members.

We thank God for the many AMAA friends and supporters and most important, we thank God for the spiritual and material blessings we enjoyed at this year's Summer Camps. □



*Children at Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan, Armenia.*



*Children at Camp Bedrosian Shushi, Karabagh. Youth at Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan, Armenia.*



# AMAA Interns in Armenia



By Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian

**T**hanks be to God for His love, providence and guidance throughout the 16 marvelous days of learning, serving and growing in Armenia as the AMAA 2015 Summer Internship took place July 6-21, under the leadership of Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian, Pastor of Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church, Downey, CA. Eleven participants came from the United States, three from Canada, three from Australia, one from Greece and one from Syria. The interns were chosen based upon the recommendation of their local pastors and their spiritual and service qualifications.

The first part of the trip was spent on the East Coast of the United States from July 6-8. Fifteen participants from North America flew to New Jersey and had two days of orientation. The program included a visit to the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ. In the Board Room, Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, greeted the group and challenged each of them to envision that one day they would fill the Board chairs carrying out the mission of the AMAA. An informative tour of the Headquarters was led by David Aynejian, AMAA Director of Finance, who explained what the AMAA does and how it operates. The rest of the day included a visit to Manhattan and a cruise around New York City. The evening concluded with a dinner, worship and fellowship hosted by the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ.

## "God's Beauty All Around Us"

From July 9-21, the group stayed at the AMAA Headquarters in Yerevan and visited churches and mission centers which are supported and sponsored by the AMAA. Badveli Hovig Hovsepian, Associate Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) in Yerevan, was very instrumental in connecting and organizing the group with various churches, local pastors and excursions to the Avedisian School and Day Care and Mission Centers. Haley Surmeian from Orange County,

CA wrote in his daily journal, *"It was just incredible to see God's beauty all around us. There is so much history here. The sanctuary, Geghart, had been linked to the apostle Thaddeus, who is one of the reasons that Armenia became Christian."*

Each morning, the group began its day with worship time and devotion and on certain occasions met with the AMAA Representative Harout Nercessian, local pastors and youth leaders who shared information with the interns about the missions of the ECA and the AMAA, and the challenges of the youth in Armenia.

The three-day visit to Camp Hankavan was the highlight of the internship, where the interns shared their faith, built new friendships and spent quality time with the Camp children and their leaders. The interns shadowed the local leaders during their games, teachings, worship services, crafts and quality times. *"We were so excited to be there,"* said intern Anna Shanazarian from Burbank, CA. *"By the end of the day we had already learned so much! The program was very well prepared and organized, and the counselors were enthusiastic and showed love to the children as if they were their own. But more than anything, we were touched by the utmost enthusiasm and genuine joy everyone had during worship. We had never seen a group of children sing so loudly and beautifully, and to know that those songs were being sung for Jesus, especially at a time period where a majority of the people do not know Christ, truly warmed our hearts."*

## Raised \$400 from Personal Funds

The group also visited needy families both in the villages and the city of Yerevan, where they witnessed immense social needs of those families and the vital ministry of the AMAA and other NGO's. The interns were so moved by the financial needs of those families that they voluntarily raised \$400 from their personal funds



and supported the eight families they visited in Dilijan, Shiragamut and Yerevan suburbs. Edward Arabian from Toronto, Canada wrote in his daily journal, *"The first home we visited, we were greeted by excitement and happiness. The family of four consisted of a father, mother and two children, one girl and one boy. We entered their home, and immediately were offered a place to sit down. Even with the absence of space they had in their home, we were touched by the hospitality and joy that this family gave us."*

Many of the families visited in Shiragamut (Lori Region) and Nshavan (Ardashad) were living in very primitive conditions, yet the group was in awe of their faith and commitment and how hard they worked to use their minimum resources in a maximum way to take care of themselves. *"As we have toured the villages, meeting many people in terrible situations,"* said intern Christian Manoukian from Monrovia, CA, *"I have noticed one thing above all else: these people are so content and happy with their lot in life. They gladly welcomed us into their homes, gave us food and drink we did not deserve to take from them, and made us feel like family. As we all worked hard to spread the gospel to them, we saw God's love and grace flowing through them. How encouraging it was to see these people smiling, laughing and praying with us."*

The group also participated in two Sunday morning services at the Evangelical Church of Yerevan and Southwestern Neighborhood Church, where Rev. Vatche preached the Word of God and several interns shared their testimonies with the congregation. Admiring the dedication of members of the Church, intern George Megerditchian from Aleppo, Syria, wrote in his blog, *"One of the members even left Camp Hankavan and came to play the keyboard with the group and to participate in the worship service at Harav Arevmdian Taghamas Church. When I heard that she came only to attend the service and to help the choir, I was amazed and touched by her dedication to her church – traveling two hours from the campsite and joining the group to sing and praise the Lord."*

## Shared Experiences of the Day

Each evening, the interns would meet to share the experiences of their day and to reflect on what they had learned. The sessions were concluded with prayer time and social hour, something that added to the spiritual fellowship among the interns. It should also be acknowledged the important roles that the internship co-leader Darren Getzoyan and the two chaperones, Eliz Hovsepian and Nayiri Papazian, played in the success of the trip.

The trip has changed each participant's perspective on missions, the positive impact stamped on their national and ethnic awareness, and their dedication and commitment to grow in the ministry of AMAA, for Armenia and its people.

## "Tell Me Stories of Armenian History"

Writing in her journal in the form of a letter to her Grandpa, intern Candice Nahigian from Fresno, CA wrote, *"Today I saw the Turkish border, and though I could not cross it, I saw the land of your birthplace. From every edge of this country, I carry you with me. I cannot look at anything without thinking of you. These vines are the vines in your yard. The trees of fruit are your citrus trees. The buildings in the villages look just like your back shed. I can see you standing in it now fidgeting with something. If you were here, we would hold hands as we walked around the grounds of the monastery of Khor-Virap staring at Mount Ararat. You would remind me of Noah's faithfulness and obedience. You would tell me*



Interns at Shogh Day Center in Yerevan.



Mount Ararat in the background.

*stories of Armenian history. You would remind me that this mountain has stood firmly, though the bustling region around it grows and changes. You would tell me that God is like this mountain, steadfast and consistent. This mountain looms in the horizon of this country and everywhere we go it is visible. Papa, I pray that God's presence is always fixed in the horizon of our lives and in the lives of the people who see this mountain."*

Thanks be to God for His provisional care throughout this internship. Thanks to the AMAA offices both in Paramus and in Yerevan. Thanks to Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, for his diligent follow-up with the entire program, for Badveli Hovsepian for his enormous service to the trip and for all those who prayed for, organized and supported the internship. □



The interns visiting the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ.





# Mission Team Makes Seventh Medical Mission to Armenia

By Dr. Albert and Susan Phillips

**T**he young woman and her two month old child worked themselves past the "gate keepers" and barged into my "doctor's office" in the AMAA Social Service Center in Stepanavan. At the time, I was working feverishly trying to see hundreds of waiting patients and was in the middle of my examination of another patient. My first response was to be aggravated, but my attitude quickly changed after she said she didn't want anything from me but to say "thank you."

I was taken aback and soon realized that she only wanted to tell me about the baby in her arms. I honestly didn't remember her from the previous year's clinic, but she said she had come with complaints of longstanding infertility and that I examined her and said I couldn't find anything physically wrong with her. She said that I did offer to pray for her that God would intervene in her life and allow her to get pregnant. She said that she got pregnant the next month and credits my prayers for her precious child. I quickly let her know that I was only an instrument of God's love for her because of my own faith in Jesus Christ. We hugged in joy as we both pondered God's miraculous works manifested in the birth of her beautiful child.

This is only one of the many stories of lives touched by the work of the Armenia Medical Mission Teams. In June, we returned for a seventh year of caring for disadvantaged Armenians in the

rural villages of the Lori Valley at the site of the 1988 earthquake. This year, our Team set a milestone of service. The Medical Team was able to see 1,350 medical patients and 300 children and young adults received preventative dental care from our dentist. The Team was composed of 33 amazing individuals, including 11 healthcare professionals. Each member had a vital role in the success of the clinic. A core group of eight translators from Armenia, all of whom have worked with us in prior years, continue to support us and are an essential part of our Mission Team.

The Mission Team staffed ambulatory clinics in Vanadzor and Stepanavan Evangelical Churches. Patients came from local neighborhoods and many were transported to the clinic by provided buses from outlying villages. Many of the patients had been seen in previous years and relayed that our treatments had improved their quality of life. Due to generous donations, we were once again able to provide patients with chronic illnesses a year's supply of medications. We imported an extensive pharmacy and patients received all of their drugs without charge. Reading glasses were also distributed. While patients were waiting to be seen, our nurses gave lectures on various preventative medical issues. During the clinic, patients were also encouraged to attend daily church services; where the good news of Jesus Christ was preached. Patients were also prayed with after each







encounter with the doctor. Many were touched both physically and spiritually.

The Medical Mission Team has committed to return to Armenia for our eighth year in June 2016. If you have any desire in serving our brothers and sisters in Armenia or are interested in knowing more about the Medical Mission, please see our website, which is located on [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org). Medical and non-medical, Armenian and non-Armenian speaking volunteers are welcome. During His ministry, Jesus often met the physical needs prior to addressing the spiritual needs of those He met. We are committed to emulating His love in Armenia. □



## Seventh Medical Mission Team Members

Erika Agbabian	Hera Kissoyan
Sabrina Agbabian	Armine Markarian
Marina Barsumian	Iren Mkrtychyan
Natalie Barsumian	Natalie Moursalian
Lisa Berberian	Dale Narwitz
Kathleen Bergen	Albert Phillips
Ruth Boyajian	Bradley Phillips
Stephen Boyajian	Lindsay Phillips
Melody Demirjian	Michelle Phillips
Edma Dumanian	Susan Phillips
Daniel Essayan	Marina Sweeney
David Essayan	Barbara Tashjian
Gregory Essayan	Christopher Tashjian
Raquel Fereshetian	Christopher Visser
Linda Figueroa	David Zadigian
Susan Jerian	Allison Zakaroff
Kyle Kevorkian	





# Stitched with Love

## AGBU Hye Geen Pregnant Women's Center in Vanadzor Receives Blankets from AMAA's Stitched with Love

**O**n June 13, AGBU Yerevan visited the AGBU Hye Geen Pregnant Women's Center in Vanadzor to deliver hats and blankets for newborns - special gifts from the Armenian Missionary Association of America's (AMAA) *"Stitched with Love"* program. Founded by Betty Cherkezian of New Jersey in 2013, the program provides knitted and crocheted hats and blankets to newborns in maternity hospitals throughout Armenia. During the visit, the AGBU Yerevan staff met 23 women, 13 of whom are expecting their first child.

"40,000 babies are born in Armenia each year, yet few hospitals in Armenia distribute hats and blankets to newborns, especially in the small towns and villages in the countryside. This is what led me to ask individuals and organizations if they could provide knitted and crocheted items," said Betty. "It has been very encouraging to see the generous support of so many people and I welcome anyone who has a love of knitting or crocheting to join this wonderful cause."

The first *"Stitched with Love"* shipment of over 500 hats and blankets made by volunteers across the United States arrived in July 2014. In the past year, nearly 800 hats and blankets for babies have been received as well as another 100 knit hats, sweaters and scarves for older children.

The needs in Armenia have become even greater due to the massive inflow of Armenian refugees coming from Syria and Iraq to escape the growing conflicts in those war-torn countries. Given this greater need in Armenia and with the growing support of generous contributors, *"Stitched with Love"* is increasing and now expanding to also include hats, sweaters and scarves for children ages 1-5 years old for distribution via AMAA and other Armenian charities. To date we have been able to send over 1,800 handmade items! Thank you!

The support from individuals, small community organizations, and church groups has been a great encouragement and is making a real contribution to the children in Armenia. It is a true demonstration of Christian love and charity.

We are so grateful for your continued interest in supporting *"Stitched with Love."*

For more information on how to participate and help in this effort, please contact the AMAA office at 201.265.2607, or visit [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org) and click on the *"Stitched with Love"* tab.



To all that have given their time, love, and support to those in need

*"Stitched with Love"* would like to say

**"Thank you"**

For your generous donations and contributions to this ongoing project.

You may also email any questions to:

Betty Cherkezian  
at [stitchedbc@gmail.com](mailto:stitchedbc@gmail.com)

All donations of hats, blankets, sweaters or scarves can be mailed to:

*"Stitched with Love"*  
c/o Betty Cherkezian  
16 Barbara Drive  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632





## AMAA Facilitates Donation of Medical Equipment and Hospital Beds To the Central Military Hospital of the Republic of Armenia

**D**On June 20, Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Life Member, Dr. Chris Tashjian, joined by Harout Nercessian, AMAA's Representative in Armenia, fellow philanthropists Dr. Vartkes and Mary Najarian, Davit Tonoyan, Deputy Minister of the Republic of Armenia's Defense Ministry, A. Abreamov, First Deputy Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General, Colonel A. Asadouryan, the Chief of the Clinic of the Central Military Hospital, and Ruzanna Khatchaturyan, President of the Armenian Association of Military Doctors and wife of the Republic of Armenia's (RA) Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan, visited the Central Military Hospital of the RA.

The group viewed various departments in the Hospital, checked the newly donated electronically controlled beds and medical equipment, and spoke with military patients who are undergoing treatment in the Hospital.

Through the creative and tireless efforts of Dr. Tashjian, who secured and handled the transport of the beds and medical equipment (valued at \$300,000) to Armenia, the AMAA undertook the feat of having the beds and equipment received and delivered to the Hospital.

The Central Military Hospital of the RA, located in Yerevan, provides advanced healthcare to servicemen and their families. All guests promised that donations of medical equipment to the Military Hospital will be continuous. □



*L to R: Dr. Chris Tashjian, Lusine Ohanyan (AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator), Harout Nercessian, Staff Member to Davit Tonoyan, Davit Tonoyan*

## AMAA Supports Martuni Village in Armenia By Purchasing a Tractor to Increase Agricultural Production

**I**n commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) joined forces with six international organizations to help with the development of Martuni Village in Armenia. The inhabitants of the Village are mostly survivors of the Genocide.

One of the most urgent needs, as presented by the Cooperative of the Village, was a tractor, which would help increase the agricultural production and efficiency in the Village.

With the support of the Agricultural Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia and the co-financing of AMAA, a Belarus-82.1 tractor was purchased for the Village. "The farmers used to start the food storage of their cattle late and they ended up very late when the rains began," said Anna Melkumyan, head of the Cultural Center of Martuni. "This new technique will help the farmers start and end the food storage of their cattle on time." □



The arrival of the tractor was a festive occasion for the villagers who celebrated this new addition to their community.

About 50 families from Martuni Village will now be able to use this newly acquired tractor to increase their agricultural production. □



# Days of Remembrance and Rededication

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

**A**s the official representative of the Armenian Evangelical community in North America (representing the AEUNA, AMAA and AEWC), I had the privilege of participating in both the Eastern Regional and the National Commemorations of the Armenian Genocide Centennial. While our Armenian Evangelical leadership gathered for meetings and observances in late April and early May in Armenia and Lebanon, I traveled to New York City and Washington, D.C., joining thousands of Armenians and others at this historic time of remembrance, solidarity and commitment to speak for the voiceless and work for justice.

On April 26 I traveled to New York to be present alongside ecumenical clergy at the Divine Liturgy at St. Vartan Cathedral. Presiding were H.E. Abp. Oshagan Cholyan Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Eastern States and Canada), and the host, H.E. Abp. Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Eastern States and Canada). The Rev. Haig Kherlopian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, read a portion of scripture as part of the service. The presence of consular representatives of thirty countries, including U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Powers, was a strong statement of solidarity, taking their place at the Cathedral alongside Armenia's Ambassador.

Rev. Kherlopian and I joined a large procession marching to Times Square, where



*Procession of Clergy during the Divine Liturgy at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.*

an estimated 15,000 people assembled for a commemorative program. A succession of speakers and participants, a great number of children, youth and family in attendance, and the Greek and Assyrian flags indicated that a broad assortment of people were there to lend each other support. Taking the podium was distinguished Genocide scholar Taner Akçam, who offered his sincere condolences to the Armenian people for their loss, while also encouraging Armenians to join forces with "another Turkey" – not the denialists

in power, but those ready to honestly face their past, prepared to offer compensation for what was lost, and willing to join with Armenians to create a brighter future.

On May 7, the events in the capital of the U.S. began. I began by participating in an informational meeting of community leaders with the President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Diasporan Minister of Armenia, held at the Willard Hotel. That same evening, amid heavy security for U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden, Rev. Kherlopian and I were seated with the ecumenical guests in the National Cathedral for the prayer service organized by the National Council of Churches. President Serzh Sargsyan and His Holiness Karekin II brought messages in Armenian, and His Holiness Aram I addressed the audience in English requesting a step beyond "cheap reconciliation" in order to bring about a more just society for all.

Throughout the three days of events and activities there were numerous displays, speakers and book signings at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, where most of the guests were staying. Friday evening, May 8, at the Strathmore concert hall in Maryland, "A Century of Armenian Music" featured artists



*Rev. Haig Kherlopian at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York City.*



*Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.*



from Armenia and the Diaspora, presenting solo, choral, ensemble and orchestral works by Armenian composers of the past 100 years.

Saturday morning, May 9, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception hosted the Divine Liturgy, celebrated by the Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin II, with a sermon delivered bilingually by the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Aram I. With over 3,000 in attendance, the service included a scripture reading in Armenian by His Excellency Msgr. Mikael Mouradian, Eparch of the Armenian Catholics in North America, followed by my reading of the same passage in English. That evening a gala banquet was held at the hotel, under the theme of "Awareness, Unity, Gratitude." Emcee Mark Geragos masterfully presided over a lengthy

program that expressed recognition to the descendants and caretakers of foundations related to great names of the past, such as Woodrow Wilson, Fridtjof Nansen, Henry Morgenthau, Stanley Kerr and more, as well as courageous persons of our day, such as Robert Dole, Fetiye Cetin, Taner Akçam, Ambassador John Evans (belatedly) and the countries that have stood on principle and recognized the Armenian Genocide.

Participating in these historic days was an honor and a duty for us, though perhaps very few are aware that the Armenian Evangelical Church worldwide has wholeheartedly been involved in the Centennial plans. We continue to do what we do for the sake of our Armenian people in all aspects of their struggles and hopes, yet we do not get discouraged, nor do we give up, because "the love of God compels us." Our labors are pleasing to God and

benefit not only our own people, but also the many others who are suffering the same fate in our times. Only a few days after these events in Washington, during His Holiness Aram I's visit to Philadelphia, the Cilician Catholicos reminded the community leaders gathered at St. Gregory's that "because of certain historical circumstances we have various divisions – the Armenian Catholic Church, the Armenian Evangelical Church, and so forth; but we must never forget that we are still from a single root, and are one people."

My prayer and efforts will continue in this same conviction, that as members of one people, we are called by God to do our utmost to help this worldwide nation called Armenia to rise from the ashes of attempted destruction, in order to be a blessing to this world, following in the footsteps of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. □

## ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: 100 YEARS LATER International Conference in Lausanne

**H**eld in Lausanne, Switzerland from June 4-7, 2015, the Swiss Churches (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) organized many events dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, such as historic films, lectures and Ecumenical Church celebrations. These events were attended in great numbers by mainly the local Swiss people. The lecturers, both Armenian and Non-Armenian, were from eight different countries. Among them were Bishop Bagrat Galstanyan from Armenia, Rakel Dink from Turkey, Ani Boudjikianian from Lebanon, Rev. Dr. René Leonian from Canada-France and Philippe Kalfayan from France. The speakers presented historic events from the Genocide in the context of the Ottoman Empire in 1915, as well as historic events of Greeks and Assyro-Chaldeans.

Following these lectures time was dedicated to discuss the current situation of Christians in Syria, Iraq and other areas in the region. The speakers stressed the importance of how people from different nations could live together in harmony.

On the final day of the Conference, an ecumenical service was held in the

Lausanne Cathedral in memory of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. The participants in the celebration were Swiss Churches, Armenian Churches, and Assyrian Churches, along with an all women quintet called "Luys," from Armenia. The main Speaker was Rev. Dr. René Leonian representing the Armenian Evangelical Church. The topic of the sermon was from the Gospel of John 8:12. He focused on the words of Christ who said, "I am the light of the world" indicating that His followers are called to be the light of the world.

Rev. Dr. Leonian stressed that being in the light means to live in truth, righteousness, and to be reconciled with one another. He said, that to live in truth means to acknowledge and accept the historical facts that took place and not to deny them. Righteousness demands that one asks for forgiveness for one's deeds and pay reparation for the damages incurred. Reconciliation demands that one moves forward by living together in harmony and peace. Referring to his recent visit to Istanbul on April 24, Rev. Leonian said that he was very impressed by how the Armenians, Turks and other people commemorated the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide in unity, and in this context how Hrant Dink tried to bring Turks and Armenians together. □



Rev. Dr. René Leonian at  
Lausanne Cathedral.



Rev. Dr. René Leonian  
with Rakel Dink.



## Rev. Dr. Haidostian and Dr. Shemmassian Present Lectures in Armenia Dedicated to the Armenian Genocide

**A**mong many representatives of the world-wide Armenian Evangelical Communities, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University, and Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, Director of the Armenian Studies at California State University, Northridge, CA, were in Yerevan, to participate in events dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 7, they participated in an International Conference, "The Mission of Armenian Clergy of the Near East during the years of the Armenian Genocide," which was held in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. The Conference mainly focused on the activities of the Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Catholic and Armenian Evangelical churches during the years of the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Shemmassian and Rev. Dr. Haidostian thoroughly presented the great contribution of the Armenian Evangelicals to the rescue of a great number of Armenians, and their survival during the years of the Genocide. They particularly focused on the activities of Rev. Dikran Andreassian, Rev. Aharon Shirajian and Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian. They also referred to Rev. Yenovk Hadidian, the unwavering pioneer who was instrumental in organizing the Lebanese-Armenian Communities in the post Genocide years 1920-1940 in Lebanon.

The Conference was held under the patronage of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, at the initiative of the RA Ministry of Diaspora and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, and with the support of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Armenian Missionary Association of America and Noravank Scientific and Educational Foundation.

RA Minister of Diaspora Hranoush Hakobyan greeted the guests, after which Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisyan, Director of the External Relations and Protocol Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, read the blessings of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, also greeted the guests.

The theme of Rev. Dr. Haidostian's presentation was "Rev. Yenovk Hadidian, the unwavering pioneer, in organizing the Lebanese-Armenian communities between 1920-1940." Rev. Dr. Haidostian's report enlightened the activities of Rev. Hadidian during the post war years in Beirut, Lebanon, who was deported to Lebanon with the remnants of the Armenians. Rev. Dr. Haidostian mentioned that Rev. Hadidian had served in the religious arena for nearly 60 years. During the years of deportation he stayed with the Armenians who were sheltered in Lebanon. Many different camps were founded here,



*The representatives of the world-wide Armenian Communities at Etchmiadzin.*

among which "Camp Adana," "Camp Hadjin" and "Camp Aintab" are worth mentioning. People living in these camps (about 10,000 Armenians) were always visited and supported by Rev. Hadidian.

During the Conference Dr. Shemmassian submitted two reports. In his first report he presented the activities of three Armenian Evangelical clergymen: Rev. Dikran Andreassian, Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian and Rev. Aharon Shirajian. The main points of Dr. Shemmassian's presentation were:

- a) **Rev. Dikran Andreassian**, Chairman of the Central Administrative Body of the Musa Dagh self-defense, organized the struggle of 4,200 inhabitants of Musa Dagh against Turks.
- b) **Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian**, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo in 1915, saved a number of Armenians from death with his bold interventions.
- c) **Rev. Aharon Shirajian**, who was deported from Marash to Aleppo, ignoring the life-threatening hazards, founded an orphanage, sheltering 13,000 orphans, defending them from Turkish threats and searches by the Turkish police.

In his second report, Dr. Shemmassian presented the activities of the Armenian Community of Aleppo during and after the Armenian Genocide. These activities were mainly aimed at relieving the pain endured by the Armenians and to ease the situation. □



*Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian*



*Dr. Vahram Shemmassian*



## Uniting Church in Australia Recognizes the Armenian Genocide



"The AMAA applauds the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Uniting Church in Australia, a noble act that follows the adoption of the Genocide resolution by the United Church of Christ's General Synod in the United States in early July. We also commend and applaud Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian's efforts in this respect. These credible and most revered acknowledgements for the crime committed will advance the cause of Truth and Justice, forward." *Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO*

**T**he Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) has formally acknowledged that the Armenian massacres and forced deportations constitute a Genocide. The UCA is the third denomination at a national level to acknowledge the Genocide that took place 100 years ago.

The UCA that came into being on June 22, 1977, after three denominations – Congregational Union in Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia, and the Presbyterian Church of Australia joined together – is the third largest Christian denomination in Australia and the first church to be created in and of Australia. At present a total of 2,500 congregations worship at a Uniting Church, including many congregations that worship in languages other than English.

This year the 14<sup>th</sup> Triennial Assembly was held on July 12-18 in the Winthrop Hall University of Western Australia in Perth, where 300 members of the UCA elected by Synods and Presbyteries across the country met.

The Armenian Evangelical Uniting Church of Sydney, located in Willoughby NSW is the only Armenian congregation that is part of the Sydney North Presbytery of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT Synod.

Rev. Dr. Chris Walker, the National Consultant for Christian Unity and Worship, together with Levon Kardashian and Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian, the former minister of the Armenian Evangelical Uniting Church of Sydney and currently the Minister of the St. Andrew's Uniting Church of Longueville and the Chairperson of Sydney North Presbytery, as well as the President of the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia, prepared a proposal (<http://assembly2015.uca.org.au/28-armenian-genocide-christian-unity-working-group>) seeking the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Uniting Church in Australia.

The proposal was moved by Rev. Dr. Walker on behalf of the Christian Unity working group and seconded by Rev. Dr. Avril Hannah-Jones. Rev. Dr. Youmshajekian made a brief speech capturing the attention of all present. "In the years of 1915-1918, the Armenian people were under the grip of annihilation and the brutal plans of genocide – but our gracious and loving God saved this first Christian nation from being wiped out," said Rev. Dr. Youmshajekian. He also mentioned that many countries and many communities in Australia had been involved in providing support, relief, food, and safe places for the Armenian people to live.

"By accepting this proposal the Assembly will keep the story of the first Christian nation alive," he said, giving thanks to the many Uniting Church congregations who had held liturgies to commemorate the Genocide.

Rev. Dr. Chris Walker, National Consultant for Christian Unity Doctrine and Worship, told the Assembly that it was deeply fitting for the Uniting Church to make this acknowledgement as the Armenian people mark the 100 year anniversary of the Genocide. He also acknowledged that both the World Christian Council and



*Stuart McMillan, President of Uniting Church in Australia and Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian.*

the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) had made statements acknowledging the massacres that took place and the suffering of the Armenian community. "Accepting this proposal would be an act of ecumenical solidarity with the Armenian people who have suffered so much and continue to do so," he said.

After the proposal was unanimously adopted, the President of the Assembly, Stuart McMillan, made a brief comment and asked all to stand for a minute of silence in commemoration of more the 1.5 million Armenians, who were the victims of the Genocide planned and implemented by the Ottoman Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the request of Rev. Dr. Youmshajekian, a prayer was offered by the NSW Moderator Rev. Dr. Myung Hwa Park, both sung and spoken in Korean and English.

The 14th Assembly has also agreed to:

- Commend the NSW and SA governments in acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and encourage the Federal and other state governments to do the same
- Affirm the value of recognizing a date on or near the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, as a day of observance and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.
- Request the National Consultant Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship to prepare
  - (a) A prayer to be provided for all congregations of the UCA for use on the day; and
  - (b) In consultation with others, educational and liturgical resources for congregations to use.

On behalf of the Armenian community of Australia and the blessings of Bishop Haigazoune Najarian, the Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Australia and New Zealand, we express our appreciation and gratitude to the Uniting Church in Australia for passing such an important resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide. □



# ***The Youth Home of Istanbul: A Story of the Remnants' Homecoming*** Presented at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ

***Act, Pact, and Impact*** was the title of a three-part lecture event sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) at the Armenian Presbyterian Church (APC) in Paramus, NJ on June 12. The event was held in honor of Hrant Guzelian, extraordinary hero of one of the most significant post Genocide rescue missions, on the occasion of the publication of the English version of his book "The Youth Home of Istanbul: A Story of the Remnants' Homecoming."

The three speakers were Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, Rev. Berj Gulleyan, Pastor of APC, and Prof. Khachig Mouradian, newly appointed visiting Professor at Rutgers University. The event was skillfully moderated by Peter Kougasian, Esq., AMAA Board member.

Mr. Khanjian's lecture began with the description of the current situation at CAMP ARMEN, where on May 6, 2015 heavy demolition equipment, belonging to a private company, entered the Camp and started the demolition of the structures on site. Young Armenian activists belonging to a group called *Nor Zartonk* (New Awakening) and a number of adults, part of over 1,500 rescued orphans who built and lived in the Camp, rushed to the site, set up their tents and stopped the process of demolition. Mr. Khanjian stated that the AMAA takes pride in a "pious and God loving Armenian called Hrant Guzelian" and in the long standing support that it has given to the "Youth Home of Istanbul."

At the conclusion of his lecture, Mr. Khanjian said, "Today the struggle continues and although the title of the property is demanded to be returned to the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasa, this struggle has no denominational identity. It is an Armenian struggle and it will bring forth an Armenian victory."



L to R: Rev. Berj Gulleyan, Zaven Khanjian, Prof. Khachig Mouradian, Peter Kougasian, Esq.

Rev. Gulleyan said that initially he had no idea who Hrant Guzelian was. He had heard from a friend that he was "humble but on fire." It is after the recommendation of Mr. Khanjian that he read the book, and realized the importance of Guzelian's legacy. Pastor Berj spoke about the impact of fathers on children. His reference was to Hrant Guzelian and the extraordinary orphan he took under his wings, Hrant Dink.

Rev. Gulleyan said, "Justice apart from God is not possible" and he continued to elaborate on Hrant Guzelian's passion: to seek the lost children and bring them home. Empowered by his love for God, Guzelian brought the boys and girls to a safe haven, to teach them and nourish them. "We need good role models like Hrant Guzelian," said Pastor Berj.

"How can we continue Hrant Guzelian's legacy?" Pastor Berj proposed, "Remembering him and the impact he had on the children he saved; and on a practical level, never stop supporting schools overseas."

Speaking about Armenians in Turkey, Prof. Mouradian said he feels that "struggling collectively is very hard." When Armenians were confronted with racism, pogroms, etc. in this context, "Hrant before Hrant" was phenomenal. "His commitment to justice and his own faith created a reality that did not match that of the typical Turkish Armenian." The moment he started the School, "he signed on to be potentially imprisoned and even make for his own demise." In his concluding remarks Prof. Mouradian said, "As we are losing our direct connection to the Armenian Genocide and life in the old country, citizens of Turkey are discovering their connection, their grandmothers. Hrant Dink was instrumental; however, it was Hrant Guzelian who blazed a trail, one of the first."

Peter Kougasian concluded the program by saying that we have not "just come to reflect on our identity, we preserve an important part of humanity that links us to each other."

A reception followed the program. □



# Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale Unveils Armenian Genocide Centennial *Stone of Remembrance KHACHKAR*

By Sevag Shanlian

**O**n April 18 the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church (AEBBC) of Glendale, CA held an outdoor ceremony for the unveiling and dedication of the Armenian Genocide Centennial *Khachkar*. The one and a half hour service featured live music by the "Armenia" String Quartet, conducted by Armen Mangasaryan.

Many members, friends and guests of the Church attended this highly anticipated service. Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian and Rev. Ariel Babikian offered invocations. A moving solo of "*Der Voghormya*" by Mariam Sireganyan followed. Glendale Mayor Zareh Sinanyan, AMAA West Coast Executive Director Levon Filian, Executive Director of Pacific Church Network Rev. Jim Smith, Glendale City Clerk Ardy Kassakhian and former Minister to the AEUNA Rev. Joseph Matossian delivered words of greeting and encouragement.

Mayor Sinanyan and Rev. Dikran Shanlian, Senior Pastor of AEBBC, unveiled the *Khachkar*. As a tribute to the martyrs and a symbol of generational unity, a floral wreath was placed at the foot of the *Khachkar* by Lucine Yardumian and young Naré Asatryan. After closing remarks by Rev. Shanlian, the congregation sang the Lord's Prayer (*Hayr Mer*) and Rev. Abraham Chaparian offered the Benediction. At the conclusion of the service, those in attendance were each given a single white rose to place in front of the *Khachkar* as the quartet played a beautiful postlude. Everyone also received a forget-me-not brass pin and a forget-me-not embroidered souvenir. Refreshments were served outdoors after the service.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were Glendale City Councilman Ara Najarian, Glendale City Councilwoman Paula Devine, and representatives from the



L to R: Zareh Sinanyan, Mayor of Glendale, and Rev. Dikran Shanlian, Senior Pastor of AEBBC.

offices of Senator Adam Schiff and Los Angeles Councilman Paul Krekorian. Many Los Angeles area clergy and community leaders as well as members of the Armenian press were also present.

The Centennial *Khachkar* was funded by the collective donations of friends and members of the Church and carved by craftsman Gaspar Gharebyan. The stone itself was imported from Armenia and carved in Glendale, CA. The dedication service was organized by Hakop Hovanisyan and Sevag Shanlian and volunteers from the Church served as greeters and ushers.

The Armenian Centennial *Khachkar* monument stands near the main sanctuary entrance facing west as a memorial to the 1.5 million Armenian Martyrs who perished during the Armenian Genocide. "*These stones shall be to the people [...] a memorial forever.*" Joshua 4:7

The Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church was founded in 1925 in Los Angeles, CA and has been in Glendale since 2006. The Church celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. For more information visit [aebc-ministries.org](http://aebc-ministries.org). □



The audience at the *Khachkar* Unveiling Service.



## AEUNA Board Meets in Salem, New Hampshire

The Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) met in Salem, NH, June 25-27. The meetings were graciously hosted by the Ararat Armenian Congregational Church and its Pastor, Rev. Samuel Katchikian. Reports and recommendations were received from all AEUNA Standing Committees, as well as the Affiliated and Recognized Organizations. Of particular concern, was the need to fill the vacancies left by the resignations of the Eastern Region Youth Minister, Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian, and the former Minister to the AEUNA, Rev. Joseph Matossian.

The Board was pleased to hear reports that both the youth ministries and the camp programs on the East and West Coasts (Camp Arevelk/Camp AREV) are doing well. The Committee on Youth recommended that the term of Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian be extended, to give them more time to seek out viable candidates for the position. In the meantime, the ministries will continue as usual reaching the youth with the Gospel of Jesus.

During these meetings, the Board also received and unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Search Committee, chaired by Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, to appoint Rev. Berdj Djambazian as the Minister to the AEUNA. According to the AEUNA Bylaws, the



Board has the power to appoint a candidate to this position for an interim period until the next Biennial General Assembly. Therefore, we look forward and invite all of our churches, fellowships and organizations to join us from June 23-27, 2016 in Chicago, IL when the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago will host us. Based on Hebrews 12:1- *Surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses*. . . , our Convention theme will be **Reviving the Zeal of our Founders**. It promises to be an exciting gathering of our churches and delegates as we celebrate our identity as Armenian Evangelicals and the General Assembly votes to confirm the appointment of the Board, by receiving our next Minister to the AEUNA.

The next meeting of the AEUNA Board of Directors will be held November 5-7, 2015 in Fresno, CA. □

## UAECNE Holds its 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly in KCHAG

The 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) was held in KCHAG, Lebanon, in the midst of news of continued turmoil in Syria and Iraq, hardships of ministry in Iran and continuing economic downturn in Greece. The opening worship service, led by Rev. Hrayr Cholakian, took place on July 6 during which time the President of the UAECNE, Rev. Megrđitch Karagoezian delivered the sermon dedicated to the theme of the Assembly "The Ideal of the Armenian Evangelical Church" based on I Peter 2:9 where we read: *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

Three thematic morning talks, followed by group work, were given by Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian. Six pastors from Armenia, who had been on a ministerial training visit in Lebanon for three weeks, were also at the Assembly. The program was further enriched by evening seminars that studied such topics as church membership, pastoral care, and congregational worship. The Assembly heard reports from the delegates and pastors of the Union churches and institutions in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Greece, while representatives of the other countries had not been able to attend. The situation of the church in Syria was highlighted and the Assembly was thankful that a good number of representatives had travelled to Beirut from Aleppo and Kessab. They all shared their pain, prayed together, but also celebrated the fact that the Armenian Evangelical Church was

truly ministering to its own and the neighboring people in times of immeasurable misery.

The Assembly authorized the Ordination Committee to proceed with the ordination of Pastor Vazrig Safarian of Tehran. Also a recent graduate of the NEST Jirair Ghazarian was licensed as preacher and is already ministering in Kessab. Elections of the members of the Central Committee took place, and decisions were taken regarding the various organizational matters on the agenda, including the celebration of the 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church in 2016.

The UAECNE Assembly, attended by almost 60 delegates and visitors, thanked God for the faithfulness of the Armenian people in the 100 years since the Genocide, and thanked the partner churches and organizations, including the AMAA, for their continued support and solidarity during the past years. □





# Rev. Berdj Djambazian Appointed Minister To the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

**R**ev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian, Moderator of the Board of Directors of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), announced the unanimous appointment of Rev. Berdj Djambazian as the new Minister to the AEUNA.

Rev. Berdj was born in St. James Armenian Convent in the Old City of Jerusalem to Hampartzoum and Mary Djambazian, survivors of the Armenian Genocide and active members of the Second Armenian Evangelical Church of Marash, pastored by Rev. Agbabian. He received his primary education in Jerusalem, Amman and Beirut. In 1962, he attended Beatenberg Theological Seminary in Switzerland, graduating in 1967.

From 1967-1973, Rev. Berdj pastored two Armenian Evangelical Churches in Biver and St. Antoine in Marseille, France. While pastoring, he attended the National Conservatory of Music in Marseille for vocal training from 1968-1972. He continued his theological studies at NEST (1975-1977) taking classes from Professor Kenneth Bailey, and Dr. Benjamin Weir, former hostage in Lebanon.

From 1973-1981, Rev. Berdj served as an educator, pastor and relief worker in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash in Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon, and the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School with 900 students. While in Bourj Hammoud, with his late brother Rev. Hagop, he established a medical clinic with six doctors, providing surgical, dental and pharmaceutical services, as well as the only ambulance service in the area.

From 1981-1993, he served as the Senior Pastor of United Armenian Congregational Church, after which he was instrumental in establishing three new congregations; one of which was co-founded with Rev. Dr. Ara Chakerian. From 1997-2007, he served as the Associate Pastor of World Missions and Adult Education at Glendale Presbyterian Church, and led more than 40 relief, evangelism and outreach teams to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey and Armenia. Communicating in six languages, including Armenian, German, French, Arabic, Turkish and English and being equipped with the gift of cultural knowledge and

understanding, made his trips impactful.

From 2005-2008, Rev. Berdj made several trips to Sudan delivering relief to Darfurian Genocide survivors. He was instrumental in building the largest church on the east side of the Nile. After the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, he made more than 25 trips to the earthquake stricken region delivering multiple medical and relief support. Believing that all mentally challenged children are true gifts from God, he committed himself to Armenia, to provide relief in the areas of food, clothing and medical supplies ensuring that all of these children receive the right to live a dignified quality of life.

Rev. Berdj was invited by the late Vehapar Vazken I of Etchmiadzin to teach at the Kevorkian Seminary to more than 75 priests. He taught classes on homiletics and classes on "How to encounter the Sectarian movements in Armenia." He is celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his TV "Nor Huys" weekly program, reaching out to the Armenian community at large with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has authored a book called "Hayazartnoum."

Rev. Berdj is married to Shoghig (Balekian) and they are blessed with three children; Daniel, Helen and Pauline, who is married to Dr. Gerrard Andonian and they are blessed with two grandchildren, Julian, 7 and Lauren, 5.

Rev. Berdj has committed himself to become the Minister to the Union not to be served but to serve and give all the time, attention and love it demands and deserves. His hope and prayer is that his accomplishments in the past will enhance his ability to discharge his duties with professional care and a compassionate heart, embodying Jesus' character in action and decision. □



## *Meet Our Staff at AMAA*

### **AMAA Appoints Magda Poulos As Director of Annual Giving**

**A**s of August 1, 2015, Magda Poulos returns to a fundraising role at the AMAA in the position of Director of Annual Giving. Magda was first introduced to the AMAA when she was a member of the consulting team with Changing Our World in 2007. Magda's eight year relationship with the AMAA is a wonderful asset, and her new role will be a great addition toward the AMAA's overall fundraising efforts.

Magda holds a B.A. in Political Science and English from Fordham University. Her entire career has been spent in non-profit fundraising, beginning at Columbia Law School, Loyola School, and a wide range of on-site assignments while at Changing Our World. She was raised in Fort Lee, NJ, where she currently resides with her husband, Frank, and three young children. Magda is excited to be back to help carry forth the mission of the AMAA with Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, and the entire AMAA team. □





## VISIT WITH ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN



*Zaven Khanjian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.*

In August, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, paid a courtesy visit to Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church at the Diocese Headquarters in New York.

In a brotherly Christian atmosphere, the Primate and Mr. Khanjian had a cordial dialogue covering the spiritual and physical well-being of the Armenian people both in the Homeland and the Diaspora. □

## VISIT WITH ARCHBISHOP OSHAGAN CHOLOYAN



*L to R: Zaven Khanjian, Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan and Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian.*

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, had a cordial visit with Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan, Primate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America in New York City, welcoming the Primate from his recent visit to the Holy See of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon where he attended the traditional blessing of the Holy Muron. Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Prelacy, also joined the meeting, where the three discussed the continuing crisis facing the Syrian Armenian community and issues relating to the Armenian people both in the Homeland and the Diaspora. □

## ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF NEW YORK OBSERVES AMAA SUNDAY



On Sunday, August 9, the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York observed AMAA Sunday. Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, preached during the special church service. Following the service, during the Fellowship Hour, Mr.

Khanjian met with members of the Church and made a special visual presentation about the AMAA programs and projects in 24 countries around the world, focusing mainly on the urgent needs of the Armenian Community of Syria in general, and mainly of Aleppo, due to the ongoing crisis in that country.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of New York was established in 1896, and for almost 120 years the Church has faithfully served the Armenian Evangelical Community in New York City - the Big Apple. Rev. Haig Kherlopian, a recent graduate of Princeton Seminary in NJ, currently ministers the New York Church. □





## The Armenian Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, MA Welcomes Executive Director/CEO of AMAA

By Stephen Papazian

On Sunday, June 28, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, and his wife, Sona, visited the Armenian Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, MA. The Church is the first Armenian Evangelical Church that was established in North America in 1892 and was the birthplace of both the AMAA and AEUNA. Mr. Khanjian led the Congregation in its worship, and in his sermon focused on giving, not only financially, but of time and talents. Following the service, the Khanjians enjoyed a home-cooked meal before Mr. Khanjian spoke to the congregants on the many AMAA initiatives, particularly those related to Syrian-Armenian relief efforts. Mr. Khanjian also reviewed the Church's progress on its exterior renovation project.

The Church building is the oldest Armenian Church building still in use in North America, with the first service in the Church being held on December 1, 1901. The renovation commenced two years ago, as 112 years of use had taken its toll on God's house. The planned renovation was expanded when it was determined that half of the foundation needed to be replaced before other work could



L to R: Sona Khanjian, Stephen Papazian, Moderator of the Board of Trustees of the Church, and Zaven Khanjian.

proceed. Since then, the entire roof and all the windows have been replaced, the tower has been buttressed, and all of the exterior wood shingles have been stripped from the façade. What remains to be done is siding the entire structure.

The Church is in the midst of fundraising to complete this renovation. Donations to this effort may be directed to the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, 22 Ormond Street, Worcester, MA 01609-3004. □



## Armenian Brethren Church of Glendale Observes AMAA Sunday

The Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale, CA dedicated May 31 as AMAA Sunday.

Rev. Dikran Shanlian, the Senior Pastor of the Church, led the Sunday worship service. Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast Executive Director, thanked the Pastor and the Congregation for the opportunity to worship with them. He conveyed greetings from the AMAA Family and brought the message both in English and Armenian. He then shared with the Congregation the challenges and the blessings the AMAA faces and encouraged them to support its ministry with their prayers and financially.

The worship service was followed by a warm reception at the church hall. The AMAA thanks the Pastor and the Congregation for their prayers and financial support. □





# Meet Our Veteran Pastors:

## The Rev. Barkev Darakjian

By Ani Darakjian, M.D.

**M**y father, Barkev, was the youngest of five boys born to Pastor Nazareth and Mrs. Arousiag Darakjian. Pastor Nazareth died from malaria when my father was 18 months old leaving his mother, Arousiag, to raise five boys on her own. My father is said to have been a fairly chubby schoolboy and was called "Tomboulig" or "Tombig." Many years later he would write a children's book called *The Adventures of Tombig*, based on his childhood memories.

After father finished elementary school at the Bethel Armenian Evangelical Church of Aleppo, he could not continue his education because of the family's financial situation. He spent his teenage years being apprenticed first to a tailor and then to a goldsmith, but he was not suited to either of these trades. He subsequently opened a bookstore, which was closer to his heart. He loved to read. His motto was to not sell a book, be it in Armenian or in English, without having read it first. During these years, Barkev stayed close to the church, teaching Sunday school and serving as a youth group leader. His bookstore became the hang out place for the church youth. His friends at church saw in him the potential for a future pastor, and urged him to attend a Bible college, but he had neither the money nor the high school diploma necessary to attend college.

By this time my father had married Armine Andreassian, daughter of Rev. Dikran Andreassian, who was the Chair of the Mussa Dagb Defense Council which defended the population against the Turkish hordes whose aim was to wipe out Armenians in the area. I am the first child of the couple. Father was not a very good businessman. It has been told that a customer walked into his bookshop and asked the price of an item. Thinking that the man would bargain with him, he gave him an inflated price. The man did not bargain. He paid the money and left with his purchase. Father's conscience bothered him so much that he ran after the man, apologized for overcharging him and returned the amount he had overcharged.

My mother soon realized that if her husband did not attain his goal of serving the Lord as a pastor, he would be miserable for the rest of his life. She encouraged him to study for, and take the exams for the British high school equivalency test called the GCE. This is where Barkev's extensive reading and self-education, as well as his wife's and sister-in-law's (his present wife's) tutoring, paid off. He passed the exams and together with my mother, they went to see President Dr. John Markarian at the newly opened Haigazian College in Beirut. Dr. Markarian agreed to give my father a chance and thus he became enrolled as a college freshman at the age of 33. After successfully completing his year at Haigazian College, he took additional exams and was accepted to the American University of Beirut and the Near East School of Theology. He graduated with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity degrees in 1965, at the age of 40.

After graduation, he became the Director of the Christian Endeavor Society, the youth organization of the churches of Syria and Lebanon, and eventually the Editor of its three publications

*Chanasser, Badanegan Art-sakank, and Louys.* He was well suited to the position of youth director, because he had so recently been a college student himself. He was loved and respected by the youth whom he served.

Despite the fact that he had grown up in a Turkish speaking *Aintabzi* household, he had acquired a depth and breadth of knowledge in Armenian language, literature, and history, through extensive reading and self-education. He was asked to fill the position of Armenian language teacher for four upper classes in a local high school. During these years, my father was not the pastor of a particular church. But I remember him getting up early on Sunday mornings, and taking some form of public transportation – since we did not own a car – to preach to shut-ins at the Armenian old age home, or the tuberculosis sanatorium located in the eastern suburbs of Beirut. He would also accept invitations from different churches to preach on special occasions.

In 1974, Barkev was invited to become Pastor of the Armenian Congregational Church in Chicago. He was almost 50 years old then. During his 21 years in Chicago, he served not only his church, but the entire Armenian Community. He established close ties with the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Churches. He taught Armenian language classes at the request of the local AGBU chapter. He mobilized his church to help the Armenian refugees arriving in Chicago from Baku, by providing everything from furniture and clothing, to orientation and help with filling out forms. His love of learning led him at age 60 to attend Mundelein College, a Catholic college where my mother served for many years as Registrar (now part of Loyola University) in Chicago. He subsequently received a Master's degree in Religious Studies specializing in Historical Theology.

My father began to write at the age of 15, and his love for literature led him to a career of writing along with his pastoral work. He has written extensively on various subjects, such as, Armenian Evangelical church history, theology, ecclesiology, philosophy, literature, and on issues of educational and national interest. He has translated several mystery and detective story books for young readers into Armenian under the pen-name *Never*. One of the books that he authored, *The Adventures of Tombig*, won an award for best Armenian children's book in modern times. His more serious works include *The History of Protestant Thought: From Luther to Our Times*; *Armenian Evangelical Identity: Historical and Theological Perspectives*; *Indispensable Heritage*; and a *Prayerbook for worship services*.





My father began his service as editor of the FORUM, a bilingual quarterly publication of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), in the 1980s, while he was still in Chicago. After his retirement in 1996, the family moved to Glendale, California, where he continued as editor for a number of years and continued to write articles in the FORUM and other publications, such as the AMAA NEWS and the UACC HERALD.

In 2000, my father became the Founding Pastor of The First Armenian Evangelical Church of Glendale. After losing his wife to leukemia, he married Agnes Andreassian in August of 2004.

Looking at the life of this fatherless and penniless young man who attained his goals of continuing his education and serving God as a minister, one might say that he was lucky, or that he was smart, or that he married the right woman, who worked to support him for many years as he went to school. But we Christians don't believe in luck. We believe in God's providential care for us, and "we know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28 *Vartsked gadar, hayrig.* □

*Rev. Dr. John Markarian, the founding President of Haigazian University, celebrated his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday in June at his home in West Pittston, PA, surrounded by his loving wife Inge, his family members and friends from the area. The following article, written by his close friend, Ed Ackerman, who was also the Editor of his book, "The Thirsty Enemy," appeared in the West Pittston local paper "The Optimist." If you wish to order Rev. Dr. John Markarian's book "The Thirsty Enemy," you may contact the AMAA Office at 201.265.2607 or visit the website at [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org). The cost of each book is \$15.00 plus shipping and handling.*

## 98 And Counting

By Ed Ackerman

If you're going to be 98, be 98 the way John Markarian is 98. Alas, we have no control over that. But, oh, if we did.

John Markarian turned 98 on June 7. He planned to play golf the next day but the weatherman did not cooperate. That's okay; there'll be other days of golf. Lots of 'em.

One of his gifts at his party, despite the emphatic "no gifts" on the invitation, was a picture of John and a good friend posed atop Campbell's Ledge, the Susquehanna River and a portion of Wyoming Valley visible far below them. It was taken last summer. No, he did not hike up there. But to see him take the stairs in his home, you get the feeling he could.

I've written about John Markarian before. He's Rev. Dr. John Markarian, ordained Presbyterian minister with a doctorate in theology. I met him just over eight years ago. On a tennis court.

He does not play tennis any longer but always says he'd like to get out and hit a ball around. He means it. Part of his daily workout, which begins with 1,500 steps on a device in his basement, is a period of "shadow tennis," following through on forehands and backhands, but without a ball. You should see his footwork.

But for all of his physical prowess, the most remarkable thing about John Markarian is his brain. He'll quote the Bible, Old Testament or New, chapter and verse, and then roll into a Broadway show tune in his rich baritone voice and belt it out right to the end, whether you want him to or not.

He consumes a book a week and good luck trying to predict the genre. Yes, the subject could be deep, heavy philosophy. But he's also the first person I knew who read *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. He made sure he saw the movie as soon as it came out.

He also stays on top of the news, national, international and local, and I wish I could convince him to write a regular op-ed piece or at least blog. I feel guilty that I am one of the few who get to

experience his take on things.

A lot of people look back on their lives and say they could write a book. John has. It's called "The Thirsty Enemy," which comes from the Biblical concept that if your enemy is thirsty, offer him something to drink. John, and his wife, Inge, who's own life would make a fabulous book, did just that during eight years they spent in war-torn Beirut, Lebanon, where John served as founding

President of Haigazian University. Terrorist group after terrorist group came to their very door with automatic weapons in their hands and fire in their eyes only to be disarmed, literally and figuratively, by an offer to sit down to coffee and discuss their issues.

"The Thirsty Enemy" is a true story. It's John's memoir. But it reads like a Tom Clancy novel. It isn't all about those war years but the part that begs the question: How did John and Inge survive? Life was cheap on the streets of Beirut during that time, and the Markarians were in the thick of things. But they lived.

And, still do. To the fullest.

And, I am lucky enough to have a front row seat. □





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# Belle Ashodian

## Investing in the Lives of Others

By David Aynejian

A few years ago, my wife and I took a vacation to Russia. As we made our way to St. Petersburg, we hired an Armenian tour guide who was originally from Gyumri. We got to talking and as soon as he found out that I worked for the AMAA, his face lit up and he said, "Do you know Belle Ashodian? She sponsored me through the AMAA."

It didn't surprise me that Belle Ashodian had sponsored him. Belle has been a faithful servant of God, generously donating to help the lives of so many less fortunate. She has sponsored numerous children in Armenia and Karabagh for more than 20 years. Her desire to help extends beyond children, as she has also sponsored countless families in Armenia and Bulgaria as well as supporting the AMAA's Soup Kitchen in Yerevan.

Here in the Paramus office, we all know who Belle is – even though most of us have never met her. We know who she is because of her faith and devotion to help those in need. First John 3:18 tells us, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." Second Corinthians 9:7 tells us that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. These two verses provide a glimpse of Belle's testimony. She has been living these verses out, and it is evidenced in her daily life and care for others.

Throughout the Bible we see how God cares for those in need, and we are to do the same. We see that in the life of Belle Ashodian. By continuing to support and invest in the lives of those less fortunate, she has made a difference in so many lives. She is a great encouragement for us all, and I am grateful for all she does and has done for the Lord through the AMAA. □



Pictured L to R: Yervant Chekijian, Sharon Chekijian, Susan Adamian Covo, Edwin Adamian, Hermine Adamian, Martha Covo, Peter Covo, Samuel Chekijian, Ruth Covo.

Sam Chekijian is a long-time friend and supporter of the AMAA. Sam was born and raised in Jerusalem. In 1956 he moved to Boston, MA and joined the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, MA.

In 2013, he visited AMAA sponsored churches and schools in Lebanon including KCHAG and Haigazian University. Since 1997 he has visited his Homeland Armenia several times and in 2013 he moved to Armenia and frequents the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghramyan Street in Yerevan.

Recently he invited several of his family members to visit Armenia. Sam was one of the sponsors who financially supported the remodeling of the AMAA-Armenia Headquarters on Baghramyan Street. □



# Elsie Haig Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

*On August 22nd, over 70 family members and friends gathered at the California Club to celebrate the 100th birthday of Elsie Haig. The greater family of the AMAA takes this opportunity to congratulate the Haig family, and pray that God will continue to bless them abundantly.*

By Karen Haig Sutton

For most Armenians, the year 1915 is a poignant reminder of the darkest chapter of Armenian history, which deeply impacted Osanna and Dikran Phillips. But soon their sorrow was eclipsed with the joyful arrival of their firstborn and only daughter, Elsie Jane. They were later blessed with two sons, Albert and George.

As a youth, Elsie was shy, an avid reader and writer. Her self-discipline helped her to achieve and maintain a straight-A record in school, becoming a member of the California Scholarship Federation and a class valedictorian at Los Angeles High School. Several of her short stories were published in the yearbooks during her tenure, and it is evident she had a talent for journalism and creative writing. Soon Elsie became socially engaged during the time she attended UCLA, spearheading the Mu Alpha sorority along with some peers. The group provided social community among Armenian women in the Greater Los Angeles area and continued to flourish for many years, after she ceased to be active.

As a teenager and young woman, Elsie diligently served her family, working in the family business and often assuming a parental role for her brothers for many years. Among her many qualities is having a servant's heart, which was demonstrated by her mother Osanna, as well as the gift of hospitality. Despite enduring many tragedies during her life, Osanna's unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus provided a foundation for Elsie's decision to follow Christ as a young adult. She met and married Haig Kashishian, better known as K. Haig and was blessed with three children: Robert, Linda and Karen.

In the same manner as her mother, Elsie has served the Lord by caring for her family and friends, selflessly meeting the needs of others before her own. She has devoted herself to studying scripture, attending Bible studies and Sunday

worship services, and leading her children to Christian instruction and worship.

II Timothy 3: 14-16 (NLT) says "You have been taught the Holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

Her family could always count on her to be there, as she was a solid and stable force in their lives. She has generously supported her family, sacrificially giving to her children. She has been hospitable to so many, having always been prepared for guests who could always count on Elsie to entertain them.

Her outstanding cooking abilities coupled with her desire for community sparked an interest in two cookbook projects. In addition to being a Dirouhi for the Daughters of Vartan, she was a leading contributor for their cookbook, gathering recipes from church members and working countless hours with the committee until it was finished. This book has benefited so many people in our community for decades as a resource for traditional Armenian recipes. The success of this book inspired Elsie to create a second cookbook for Forest Home Women's Auxiliary. As chairperson, she gathered many recipes from family and friends, including members of this church. As well, she wrote articles for the UACC Herald, along with inspirational stories as a hobby.

One of Elsie's biggest passions is helping those in need. She supports various causes which assist those who struggle, both spiritually and financially. For this reason, she loves the AMAA because the gospel message is proclaimed in its mission to support needy Armenians. And it does not stop with Armenian causes. She



*L to R: Karen Haig Sutton, daughter, Linda Haig Appleton, daughter, Elsie Haig and Robert Haig, son.*

generously supports worthy charities that help the needy, such as the Union Rescue Mission, the Salvation Army, and a number of others, with the same zeal.

Elsie is the proud grandmother of four grandchildren: Kathleen Haig, Kevin Sutton, Dena Sutton-Couasnon, and Justine Sutton.

She is the great-grandmother of Jacob Sutton.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau statistics in 2014, there are less than two people in 10,000 who live to be 100 years old. The Lord has given Elsie a remarkable gift of longevity! Often asked by her many "fans" about her secret of living a long and robust life, Elsie credits her healthy diet and regular exercise regime. But first and foremost, her devotion to the Lord has bestowed a blessing of longevity found in God's word.

"Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise. If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:2-3 (NLT)

Elsie has inspired and blessed so many who have been fortunate to know her. □



## Visitations

Recently, Levon Filian, West Coast Executive Director of the AMAA, visited Chicago, Munster and Detroit. He preached and conveyed AMAA greetings at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago in Mount Prospect, IL, where he brought the Gospel message and conveyed greetings from the AMAA. He also had the opportunity to visit with several friends and supporters of the AMAA. Among them were, Dr. Henry and Carol Hadidian. Dr. Hadidian and Mr. Filian were invited by Rev. Dr. Vahan and Rosette Tootikian for fellowship and fine dining.



Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, in Mount Prospect, IL.



Dr. & Mrs. Henry and Carol Hadidian



Levon Filian, Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian and Dr. Henry Hadidian

During his visit to New England, Mr. Filian visited with Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Doreen Bilezikian, and their son Jeffrey Bilezikian, major supporters of the AMAA. He also attended the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cranston, RI, where he conveyed greetings from the AMAA.



Charles, Jeffrey and Doreen Bilezikian.



Some of the members of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cranston, RI pictured with Levon Filian and the Minister of the Church, Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian (back row center).

In July, Levon Filian paid a special visit to Dr. Richard Kasper of Newport Beach, CA, a long time supporter of the AMAA. Together in a friendly atmosphere they discussed some of the future mission projects of the AMAA.



# Յիշելու եւ Պահանջելու Համար

ԵՐՈՒԱՆԴԻ Հ. ՔԱՍՈՒՆԻ

Հայ ժողովուրդի դեմ գործադրուած Յեղասպանութեան 100-ամեակին առիթով ազդարարուած **ԿԸ ՅԻՇԵԼՄ ԵՒ ԿԸ ՊԱՀԱՆՋԵԼՄ** լուրջագր կենսագործելու նախապայմանը՝ հոն նշուած երկու բառերուն ամբողջական գիտակցութիւնն է, եւ անոնց տարողութեան ճիշդ գնահատանքը:

Ի՞նչ է որ պիտի յիշենք: «Յեղասպանութիւն» բառն իսկ իր յաճախակի ու մերթ թերեւակի գործածութեամբ կրնայ իր պարունակէն շատ բան կորսնցնել, ու մշտնապատել ամբողջական դրսեւորումը համապատկերին, որուն ցաւազգացութիւնը՝ աւանդաբար կազմակերպուած յիշատակի հանդիսութիւններուն կամ բողոքի քայլարշաւներուն կը բորբոքի:

Յեղը՝ ֆիզիքապէս, անհատներու համագումարն է, ու եթէ հնարաւոր է, պիտի հաշուել թէ մէկ ու կէս միլիոն հայ մարդու մահը ինչպէս տեղի ունեցաւ: Հրէշային ի՞նչ միջոցներու դիմեցին, բազմահազար մարդ՝ իւրաքանչիւրը սաղաթելական նոր հնարքներով սպաննելու: Կարելի՞ է այդ գումարը առնել մէկ շրջանակի մէջ, եւ ըսել թէ ինչ էր նախնիին տարողութիւնը:

Ո՞վ կրնայ բառով, գիծով կամ գոյնով պատկերել բռնագաղթը: Այնքան հեշտ է արտասանել բառը, նետել գիծը, զարնել վրձինը, քայց ո՞վ կը յանդգնի, թէկու՞ մտապատկերի մէջ, քալել Խարբերդէն Տէր Զօր... քալել ոտաբոպիկ ու կիսամերկ, անօթի ու ծարաւ, քալել Թուրքին ու Քիւրտին խենեշ հայեացքին տակ, քալել մտրակներու շաշինէն սթափած... քալել՝ ճանապարհին անթաղ ձգելով եաթաղանի հարուածով կամ սովամահ ինկած հայր, մայր, քոյր, եղբայր, զաւակ...:

Բայց մարդը միայն ֆիզիքական գոյութիւն չէ: Ան ծնող է, որդի, օճախի սին է եւ ծլարձակող ոստ: Ան նաեւ միտք է ու մտածողութիւն, հաւատք ու բարոյական կենցաղի չափանիշ, ստեղծագործ ուղեղ է ու ձեռք, ժառանգուած մշակոյթի բեռնակիր-պահակ, ու պատմութեան շնչող օղակ:

Ու երբ կը ջարդեն օղակը...:

Հողը՝ Յեղին գոյապահպանման երաշխիքը: Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան ամբողջական իրագործումը ապահովելու համար, Թուրքը «պիտի սպաննէր» ե՛ւ Հայաստան Հողը, որ նշանակէ՝ հալածաթափել զայն ու բռնագրաւել:

Այդպէս կ'իրականանայ ծրագիրը՝ Յեղին բռնագաղթով ու կոտորումով, Հողին հայաթափումով ու բռնագրաւումով:

Հիմա մտապատկերի վրայ պիտի դնել հագարաւոր տարիներ իր Յեղը պահած Հայաստան Հողը՝ որ սնուցած էր իր զաւակները, անուանակոչուած անոնցմով, ձեւ ու կերպարանք ստացած անոնց աշխատանքով ու քրտինքով, դիմագիծ ստացած ու իր տեղը ճշդած երկրագունդին վրայ...:

Այսօր, որբացած իր ժողովուրդէն, Հողը կը տուայտի թուրք բռնատէրի ոտքերուն տակ:

Պիտի յիշե՞լ Յեղասպանութիւնը: Ապա ուրեմն պիտի յիշել իր այս ամբողջական տարագով ու մանրամասն բովանդակութեամբ:

Բայց Յեղասպանութիւնը յիշողութեան մէջ ունենալու ու յիշելու համար, նախ պիտի իմանալ, եւ իմանալու համար՝ սորվիլ:





Պիտի սորվիլ եւ իմանալ որպէս գիտութիւն, որպէսզի ԿԸ ՊԱՀԱՆՋԵՄ-ը իր հերթին իմաստաւորուի ու տարողութիւն ստանայ:

Ի՞նչ է պահանջուածը:

Հայ ժողովուրդի դէմ գործադրուած Յեղասպանութեան Յիսնամեակին, քաղաքամայր Երեւանը բարձրադաշակեց մէկ մարդու պէս.

ՄԵՐ ՀՈՂԵՐԸ... ՄԵՐ ՀՈՂԵՐԸ...

Առաջին պոռթկումով պահանջուածը կը մնայ անսակարկելին, իրաւն ու արդարը:

Թուահամարով չի պարփակուիր կորուստներուն գումարը: Անհնարին մտամարզանք է այդ:

Գումարումներով ու գումարներով ժամանակ պիտի չվատնել հիմա:

Նահատակները կը շարունակեն խռոված մնջել, հերոսները ինչո՞ւնեք ու պատասխան փնտնել, դեռ կանգուն մնացած տուները տանտէրերը սպասել, կիսաւերներն ու փլատակները ողբալ իրենց անցեալ մեծ ու փոքր փառքերը, եւ անիծել պատճառ եղողը...:

Բայց ինչ որ արարչագործուած էր ի սկզբանէ, ու կոչուած՝ փրկելու կորուստի դատապարտուած մարդկութիւնը՝ Նոյեան Տապանով, դառնալու էր համաշխարհային քաղաքակրթութեան օրրաններէն մէկը՝

Հայ Հողը, Հայուն Հողը՝ Հայաստան...

Հայ Հողը չի գիշիր, չի հանդուրժեր օտար տէրեր, չստրկանար, ու իր արգանդի ընդերքներէն կը ճշայ իր ինքնութիւնը, ու կը հաւատայ, թէ՛ վաղ թէ ուշ, Փոքր Միերը անպայման դուրս կու գայ քարայրէն, ու ինք կը շալկէ գայն իր Քուռկիկ Զալալով ու Թուր Կայծակով...

Հայ Հողը, Հայուն Հողը գիտէ որ կու գայ ճշմարտութիւնը խոստովանելու օրը, արդարութեան յաղթանակի օրը, այն օրը, երբ Հայուն խոփը կրկին կը պատռէ իր արգանդը ու կը սերմանէ կեանք, երազ ու յաղթանակ:

Հայ Հողը գիտէ այս բոլորը:

Հայ Հողին տէ՞րը:

Ահա թէ ինչո՞ւ գիտնալու եւ հաւատալու համար՝ պիտի յիշել, պիտի աշակերտել, պիտի սորվիլ, պիտի ուսումնասիրել... Առնանալ հողին ու պատմութեան հետ: Նոյնանալ Հայ Հողին հետ, Հայ Հողին ու Զուրին հետ, հողին վրայ աճած ծիլ ու ծաղկին, թուփ ու ծառին, այգիին ու պարտէզին, արտին ու արօտավայրին, տնակին ու պալատին, դպրոցին ու եկեղեցիին, վանքին ու ամրոցին,

գիւղին ու քաղաքին, ու այդ բոլորով՝ պատմութիւն կերտած ժամանակին ու Հայ Մարդուն հետ:

Միայն Հայ Հողին ու Հայ Պատմութեան հետ նոյնացած Տարագիր Հայն է որ կրնայ գիտակցիլ թէ ի՞նչն է որ պիտի ՅԻՇԵԼ եւ ի՞նչն է որ պիտի ՊԱՀԱՆՋԵԼ:

Պահանջուածը՝ Իրաւատէր Պահանջատէրի Պահանջով՝

Սրբազան եւ անսակարկելի իրաւունքով՝ Թուրքին կողմէ բռնագրաւուած Հայուն Հայ Հողն է: Ժամանակ պիտի չվատնել «Յեղասպանութիւնը ճանչնալ», «Ներողութիւն Խնդրել», «Հատուցում» բառերով, բառերու շուրջ սակարկելով:

Մէկ ու Միակ է Պահանջուածը՝

Հայ Հողը, Հայուն Հողը... □

## Pokrig Serdigner DVDs Available At AMAA's Bookstore

The aim of Pokrig Serdigner (Little Hearts) is to reach out to Armenian children ages 4-10 with the knowledge of God's Word and their Armenian Christian history and identity.

The 2 DVD pack contains 12 Bible stories in Armenian: The Creation story; the Birth, Life, Teachings, Miracles, Crucifixion, Resurrection, the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Coming of the Holy Spirit, the Beginning of the Church, and about Heaven.

The stories have object lessons, pictorial teachings, prayers and Sunday school songs, with frequent highlights on our Armenian Christian History: the first evangelists to Armenia, Armenians being the first Christian nation in history, Vartan Mamigonian, and our rich Armenian heritage of faith.

These DVDs can be used in Sunday schools, Armenian schools, Saturday Armenian Language and Armenian History schools, Bible classes, Christian Education and Armenian Heritage classes, at home, VBS, Camps, Chapel services and during special Holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Vartanants, etc.

To order Pokrig Serdigner DVDs (Item #CO360), please fill out the Book Order Form on Page 43. You may also visit the Bookstore section of AMAA's website [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org), or call the AMAA office at 201.265.2607. For each 2 DVD pack, a minimum donation of \$10 is suggested plus the cost of shipping and handling.



## William Appleton

William A. Appleton of Beverly Hills, CA, passed away on June 29, 2015, at the age of 67 after a long, arduous battle with cancer. Bill was born December 8, 1947 in Ventura, CA to parents William and Hildreth Appleton of Simi Valley, CA. He graduated from Simi Valley High School in 1965. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Navy and was deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin on the USS Midway during the Vietnam War. He graduated from Pasadena City College in 1973 with an A.A. in photography. He married Linda Haig on May 12, 2001.



Bill was a published author, a creative photographer, and a historian among other things. Bill was a soul mate, a father and friend. He exemplified how a man should live his life through selfless acts of service, courage in the face of adversity and the love and compassion he showed to others.

Bill's funeral was held July 9 at The Old North Church at Forest Lawn Memorial Cemetery (Hollywood Hills) officiated by Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian. A celebration of his life followed at United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA.

Bill is survived by his wife, Linda, and three children, Philip, Alec and Mary. □

## Eunice Violet Chamichian

Eunice Chamichian, a native of Aleppo, Syria, passed away on August 13, 2015 in Fresno, CA, with her family at her side. She was 91.



A graduate of Aleppo College for Girls, Eunice spent her life in service to God and her family. The first years of her married life to James Chamichian, of Aintab, Turkey, were spent in Jerusalem, Palestine, from where they became refugees and moved to Amman, Jordan, and then again to East Jerusalem which at the time was part of Jordan. In 1955, she and her family immigrated to the United States, moving to Fresno in 1957, where she and her husband served the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church.

In her mid-forties, Eunice went back to school to study special education at California State University, Fresno. After graduating cum laude, she taught for 20 years at the Lori Ann Infant Program at Fresno Unified School District, which she was instrumental in founding.

Devotion to God was most important for her. In the roll of pastor's wife she started and taught Sunday schools, Bible study classes, and was in demand as a speaker at church events. Eunice was

an accomplished cook, a musician, and was fluent in five languages. In her retirement, she devoted herself to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She spent her last two years at Mrs. Scott's, a care home, where she was lovingly taken care of.

She is survived by her daughters, Ani Chamichian, Arpi Keledjian, and Grace Chavoor; her sons-in-law, Henry Keledjian, and Jack Chavoor; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life Service for Eunice was held at the First Presbyterian Armenian Church of Fresno, CA, on August 22, 2015.

In lieu of flowers, gifts of remembrance may be made to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652, earmarked for Syria Relief. □

## Lucy Cherkezian

Lucy Cherkezian, 97, of Englewood, NJ passed away peacefully on July 24, 2015.

Lucy was born in Troy, New York on September 25, 1917 and grew up in New York City. She was the third oldest of six children of immigrant parents Karekin and Elyse Asadorian.



In her early childhood, she and her brothers and sisters were "recruited" from her Bronx neighbor by dedicated Sunday School teachers from Calvary Baptist Church in Manhattan who would pick up the local children by bus for Sunday church services. It was there that she and her siblings founded the roots of their Christian faith.

She married the late Mehran Cherkezian on June 15, 1946. They settled in Englewood and later Bergenfield, NJ and raised three children – Rosanne, John and Joyce.

She worked in sales and administrative positions most of her life in the corporate world. She was industrious and continued to work into her 80s full time for the Bergen County Division of Youth and Family Services.

Lucy was a devoted and loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She taught her children to love God, be loyal to family, to appreciate their Armenian culture, and to be good stewards of the world. She was an adventurous, outgoing, friendly person – always ready with a smile and good word. She was a loving person whose family meant the world to her. Her grandchildren were the "apple of her eye."

She was a faithful member of the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus for more than 40 years. The Armenian Missionary Association was an organization she held close to her heart.

Funeral services were conducted on Monday, July 27 at the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus. She is survived by her loving children, daughter Rosanne of Englewood, NJ, son John and

his wife Betty of Englewood Cliffs, NJ, daughter Joyce and her husband Steve of Somerset, NJ and her adoring grandchildren, Renee, Michael, Christina, and Elyse.

Donations in her memory may be made to the AMAA Armenian Orphan – Child Care Fund, Paramus, NJ or the Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ. □

## Mary Darakjian

Mary Darakjian, beloved mother of Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President of the AMAA Board of Directors, passed away on July 27, 2015 in Chicago, IL. She was 90 years old.



Born in Aleppo, Syria to Yakoub and Mennoush Cholakian, she received her elementary education at Armenian Evangelical Bethel School and her high school education at the Aleppo College for Girls. She wanted to go on to college but the conditions in Aleppo and her family situation did not permit her to do so. Mary started working as a teacher at Bethel School fulfilling a desire to pass on knowledge that she had acquired from her teachers. In 1948, she married Pastor Emmanuel Darakjian who was the Principal of the Bethel School at the time. Soon after their wedding, the couple moved to Kessab where Badveli Emmanuel served as Pastor of the Keorkune and Ekizoluk churches.

In 1950, they were blessed with their first daughter Arpy. In 1952 Badveli Emmanuel received an invitation to serve as the Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Davoodieh in Aleppo. In 1953, the family had another addition, a son who was named Nazareth after Emmanuel's father. The family was blessed with another son Hrair in 1957. Soon after Hrair was old enough to go to school, Mary resumed her career as a teacher and started teaching Armenian language and music at the Armenian Evangelical School in Davoodieh. In 1966, Mary and Emmanuel were blessed with their second daughter Suzy. That same year the family moved to Lebanon where Rev. Emmanuel served as Principal of the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School in Nor Marash and Mary worked in a clothing store. In 1976 the family moved to Chicago escaping the civil war in Lebanon. Mary worked in a department store and later found a job at the Northern Trust Bank where she kept working until her retirement in 1989. In Chicago Mary was very active in the local Armenian Evangelical Church.

Mary was the ideal mother, housekeeper and yeretsgin (pastor's wife).

As a young girl she had an immense desire to learn how to play the piano and to own a piano. She essentially taught herself to play the piano and when she started working as a teacher she saved every penny that she earned and in a few



years accumulated enough money to buy a piano. That piano stayed in the family for 30 years and her four children had to learn to play the piano, it was not optional.

Her knowledge of music came in very handy during church services. In addition to being the yeretsgin, she was also the church organist, choir director and music teacher in Sunday school.

Mary was very dedicated to her family, her children and grandchildren and in turn enjoyed the love and respect of her immediate and extended family members. She is survived by her husband Rev. Emmanuel Darakjian, Mr. & Mrs. Curtis and Arpy Sahakian, Drs. Nazareth and Ani Darakjian, Drs. Hrair and Nadia Darakjian, Suzy Darakjian, Lory Sahakian, Eddy Sahakian, Rev. & Mrs. Haig and Nora Darakjian, Dr. Ara Darakjian, Christopher Darakjian and. Danielle Darakjian.

A Memorial Service was held on Friday, August 7, at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, in Mount Prospect, IL. □

## Lucina Agabian Hubbard

Lucina Agabian Hubbard passed away on June 28, 2015 at her home in Los Angeles, CA at the age of 87.

She was born in Cyprus to Reverend Siragan and Parouhi Agabian. Her father was the Minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus. Lucina was four years old when the family moved to Aleppo, Syria where her father continued his ministry at the Emmanuel Church. She was a student at the elementary school of the Church and after she graduated from the American High School for Girls she went to California where her two brothers, Mihran and Hrant, had moved as students.

She joined them as a student at UC Berkeley, and when her parents joined them the family settled in Los Angeles. Lucina continued her studies at UCLA in the World Arts and Cultures program. After graduation she taught two courses, Introduction to Armenian Music and Armenian Musical Culture, at the University of Southern California for 21 years. She spent many months in Armenia studying Armenian folk music. She established a unique music program at Armenian Evangelical C & E Merdinian School based on the methodology of Orff Schulwerk and Kodaly, with a special emphasis on Armenian music. She enjoyed teaching music to children while she also was a soloist in many concerts. As Co-Chair of the Hymnal Committee, she spent 17 years compiling material for the New Armenian Evangelical Hymnal, a bilingual hymnal representing a broad variety of musical and literary styles from many nations and cultures, including a large selection of Armenian liturgical music.



When Lucina was at UC Berkeley she met Harmon Hubbard, a graduate student in Physics and friend of her brother Mihran, and they decided to get married. Lucina's father performed the wedding at the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena. Harmon and Lucina asked her brother, Hrant, who had just completed his studies in Architecture, to design a house for them. They both enjoyed living in this house until they passed away three years apart.

Lucina's departure from this world has been a very difficult experience for her family and friends. The genuine expressions of love from friends everywhere, has been a consolation to the family. Remembrances of friends and acquaintances writing or telling of an experience that they remember, where Lucina's character, was shining in love and sympathy, has given great consolation.

"Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands, lift up your voice, rejoice and sing." Psalm 100:1-2 □

## Rev. Hagop Jambazian

Rev. Hagop Jambazian, brother of Rev. Berdj Djambazian, the newly appointed Minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, went to be with the Lord on July 16, 2015, in Yerevan, Armenia.

Born in Jerusalem in 1938, Rev. Jambazian was the son of Armenian Genocide survivors Hampartsoum and Mary Jambazian. Growing up in Old Jerusalem, as a young boy, his grandmother would take him to St. James Apostolic Church every Sunday. He attended the *Srpots Tarkmantchats* School during those years.

Music was a huge part of his life. Every morning he would wake up to his father's voice, singing praises to the Most High. His father's love of God and music were an inspiration for him, and that is where his love for singing and for the Lord was planted into his heart.

God soon opened the doors for Hagop to attend a Theological Seminary in Switzerland. During his time in the Seminary, he was a soloist and became a member of the acapella quartet. He then studied music in Germany. Hagop felt that God was calling him to touch the world with Christ's love through music. He was the first person to compose hundreds of praise songs with Armenian style music.

Soon after, God called him to serve at the Trans-World Christian Radio. While working there, he committed himself to composing Christian music and songs. His compositions were in Arabic, Armenian, Bedouin and Turkish languages. He soon began to give concerts sharing the love of the Lord Jesus Christ through his praise songs



all over the Middle East, preaching about the unchangeable Christ in an ever-changing world.

Later he formed a professional choir and orchestra in Yerevan, Armenia, where renowned soloists performed his composed pieces. He composed works such as Christ's Passion, the Armenian Genocide Requiem, the Darfur Genocide Requiem, a Christmas Oratorio and a Resurrection Oratorio. He composed over thirty songs dedicated to mothers based on a poem entitled Hushartzan Mayrigees, (Memorial to my Mother), written by Armenia's well known poet Hovhanens Shiraz. He also composed some national and folk music.

After the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, he established a relief center to assist the survivors from hundreds of villages, providing food and medical supplies. To this day, over 5,000 families receive monthly assistance from this ministry. His works are now spread all over the world fulfilling his calling to touch the untouchables through music with the love of God.

Rev. Jambazian's funeral service was held on July 17 at St. Sarkis Church in Nor Nork, Armenia and he was laid down to rest in his beloved Motherland Armenia. A memorial service in celebration of Rev. Jambazian's life was held on July 25 at the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA, with the participation of area Armenian Evangelical ministers and the New Hope Singers.

Rev. Jambazian is survived by his wife Knar and three sons, Raffi, Baruyr and Drtdad. □

## Haroutune Pambakian

Harout Pambakian went to be with the Lord on May 30, 2015. He was 80 years old.

As a loving son, Harout loved and respected his parents, Mrdich and Aznive. From a young age he remembered the 5th commandment, "Honor your father and mother." He loved his family and did his best to provide for them. He loved his siblings George and Rosette and his late brother Hagop, and their respective families.

Harout was a kind, generous, hardworking and caring person who loved to help people in need. He employed Armenian immigrants who came over from Syria and Lebanon to the United States and made sure they had enough to live on.

Harout was a man of integrity. He never took advantage of people and in his business made sure no one was overcharged. Harout had a pleasant personality; he enjoyed humor and was humorous himself. Finally among many good character traits Harout was a man of faith. He read his Bible every day. He had a personal relationship with his Lord, he prayed for every family member and friends. He had a strong faith and was ever grateful that God loved him



and saved him from several mishaps and accidents.

He is survived by his wife Nellie, daughters Christina, Rosette Pambakian, Grace and husband Tomas Sekayan, grandson Sahag, brother George and (Jackie) Pambakian, sister Rosette Pambakian Tootikian and husband Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, nephews, Mgo (Denise), Haig (Yvone) Pambakian, niece Zvart (Nick) Herodotou, nephews Jacques, Johnny (Grace), Jimmy (Yesenia) Pambakian and many great nephews and nieces.

Memorial donations in lieu of flowers can be made to the Armenian Brotherhood Bible Church and to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. □

## Paul Khristaki Paulson

Paul K. Paulson, a long-time member and leader of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church in Havertown, PA, passed away on July 7, 2015. His family is grateful that in recent months, Paul celebrated three milestones with his family: his 98th birthday, meeting his first great grandchild (namesake, Paul Boyajian), and attending the wedding of his first grandchild, Janice Paulson, to Josh Marpet this past June.



Paul was born in Swarthmore, PA to Pavlos Pavlidis (later changed to Paul M. Paulson) and Anastasia (Leondiades), Greek immigrants, who like many Armenians, were orphaned during the Christian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish government during WWI. He attended Swarthmore High School and received his high school diploma from Chicago Christian Academy. He earned a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1939.

Paul and his brother Michael were the second-generation owners of Paulson & Company, a retailer of carpets and oriental rugs in Swarthmore. Paul started working with his father during high school and after the war and worked there until his retirement in 1991 at age 77.

He briefly served in the US Marine Corps and transferred to the US Navy attaining the rank of Lt. Jr. Grade. Paul served as navigator on the USS Solomons and USS Card aircraft carriers during WWII. His crew received a Presidential citation for sinking the most enemy submarines.

Paul was a member of the Swarthmore Rotary Club and was honored as the benefactor of Paulson Park in Swarthmore.

Paul was widowed in 1999 after 50 years of marriage to Laura (Amen). Surviving are son P. John (Debra) Paulson of Media, PA and their two daughters; and daughter Debra (Stephen) Boyajian of Lumberton, NJ, their seven children and nine-month old grandchild. He is also survived by his devoted late-life companion, Mary Lindsey, of Glen Mills, and his extended family.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church or the Armenian Missionary Association of America. □

## Rachel Marie Shahinian and Annika Anoush Zinsley



Rachel Marie Shahinian of Alameda, CA and her 10 year old daughter Annika Anoush Zinsley were killed in a tragic car accident on August 15, 2015.

Rachel was born on April 26, 1965, in Hollywood, CA, the fifth child of John and Eva Shahinian. Rachel and her siblings, Albert, Susan, Hilda and Evelina, grew up in Mar Vista, CA in a busy home often filled with cousins and relatives, friends and neighbors and always a few pets – especially the cats Rachel loved. Rachel and her family were members of the United Armenian Congregational Church in Hollywood. She was active in Sunday school and Youth Group, making lasting and valued friendships. Rachel attended Beethoven Street Elementary School, Mark Twain Junior High School and Venice High School, where she was active in theater and drama. Rachel graduated from Venice High School in 1983 and went on to Pepperdine University in Malibu, majoring in Theater Arts and Music.

After college, Rachel moved to Fresno and lived with her parents. She worked for a local laboratory, never imagining that job would eventually lead to her career as a scientist. Rachel moved to Alameda in 1990 and loved this community. She began her career at Roche Molecular Systems in February 1994, and worked her way up to Senior Scientist. Working for Roche, Rachel gained many cherished friendships, new challenges, personal growth and opportunities for world travel.

Not long after moving to Alameda, Rachel met her true love and life-partner, Michael Zinsley. Rachel and Mike shared a love of travel, hiking and camping, scuba diving, good food, music, and being with friends. The greatest joy in Rachel's life came with the birth of their beautiful daughter, Annika Anoush Zinsley, on January 31, 2005. Annika immediately became the center of Mike and Rachel's world. No mother could love her child more than Rachel loved Annika. In addition to working and being a mother, Rachel was active in the community, singing, volunteering, assisting at Annika's school and enjoying a rich social life with

friends. The last few years, Rachel and Annika both danced in the annual presentation of the Nutcracker Ballet performed by the Alameda Civic Ballet.

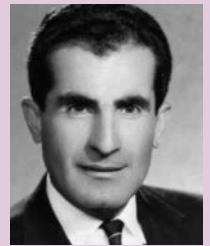
Annika thrived here, and enjoyed her dance lessons, her Girl Scout troop and her school friends. She loved hiking, rock climbing, boating on the Bay, camping just about everywhere, and cuddling with mom and dad. She was surrounded by a loving family that spans four generations, many of whom she had just visited two weeks ago.

Rachel loved her family – and that includes her cat Oscar – as well as her many friends. She was an amazing mother, a devoted partner to Mike and a caring daughter. God blessed Rachel with intelligence, a wonderful talent for music – both singing and playing piano – a generous and giving nature, and a thoughtful and compassionate heart. She loved a great cup of coffee, cooking for others, and sitting down for a good chat. She was fun to be with and loved to laugh. Rachel touched so many people in her 50 years, as did Annika for 10 years. Rachel and Annika lived with integrity. They were the same person in public that they were in private. There was an honesty about them that drew us in and made us feel safe and welcome.

Part of Rachel's private life was her personal faith. It is with that same faith that we as her family thank God for the joy and privilege of having shared life with them, and we deeply miss them both. □

## John Zerounian

John Zerounian was the second child, born on March 23, 1922, in Albustan "Elbistan," Turkey to Yeprem and Anna (Hartunian). He passed away on May 28, 2015, in Fresno, CA, at the age of 93.



At the young age of two, along with his parents and sister, they were forced by Turkish militants to leave their home because of the Armenian Genocide. They took the long journey through the desert of Der Zor to reach Aleppo, Syria, which became his new home for the next 38 years.

In 1962, he met Betty Ann Ballasian and they were married in Aleppo, Syria. Two months later, he followed her to the United States. A few years later, they were blessed with a daughter, Lisa, and shortly thereafter another daughter, Lynette. Unexpectedly, Betty Ann died and left John a widower with two young girls to raise. John owned an upholstery business for 45 years.

From an early age, John was a man devoted in his faith. He was an active member and youth leader at Bethel Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church in Aleppo. John will be remembered for his Christian faith and his devotion to the Lord. John attended the First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno, CA faithfully every Sunday, where he was a member since his early days of coming to the U.S.

*Cont'd on following page...*



BOOKS

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**THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL WORLD COUNCIL**, by Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, *A Bilingual Book, is the History of the Armenian Evangelical World Council from its inception in 1978 through the year 2014.* pp. 397, hc #CO356 .....\$35.00

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John Zerounian

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Up until his last day alive, John read his devotional "Our Daily Bread" and his Bible every morning. Every night before he went to bed John prayed, especially for his six grandchildren that they continue to grow in the Lord and lead productive successful lives.

John will be missed for his kind heart and his ability to welcome and talk with people. He was an ardent supporter of his church and the AMAA. For many years he sponsored at least four children in Armenia through the AMAA.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Betty Ann; sister, Lydia Zerounian; his brother-in-law, Eddie Barsamian; his brother, Haroutun Zerounian; and his nephew, Yeprem Zerounian. John was the loving father of Lisa Tokatian and husband Aram, and Lynette Nahigian, and ex-husband Eliot; six grandchildren, Adrine and Carina Tokatian, Gardenia, Candice, Simon, and Armine Nahigian; and loving sister, Briske Barsamian and her two children, Rita and Mark Barsamian. □

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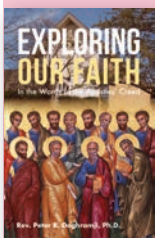
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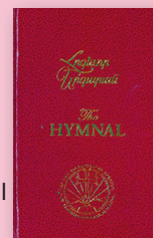
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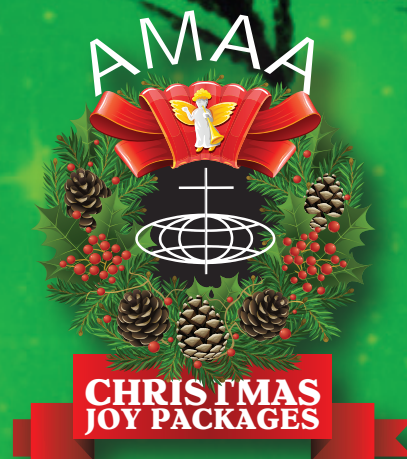
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